The India of My Dreams

By
MAHATMA GANDHI

Compiled by R. K. PRABHU
With a Foreword by
Dr. RAJENDRA PRASAD



HIND KITABS LIMITED BOMBAY

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PUBLISHERS - - BOMBAY

First Published, Independence Day,
15th August, 1947.
Reprinted, 1949.

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Printed by N. E. Chinwalla, Manager, at British India Press (Props. Leaders' Press Ltd.), 108 Love Lane, Bombay and Published by V. Kulkarni, Hind Kitabs Ltd., 261-263 Hornby Road, Bombay

FOREWORD

It is a happy idea to place before the world and the country at the present moment, when we are entering upon a new era, a picture of the India of Mahatma Gandhi's dreams. The freedom which we have won is throwing upon us the responsibilities of making or marring the future of India. It is in no small measure the achievement of Mahatma Gandhi's leadership. The matchless weapon of truth and non-violence which he has used is needed by the world to cure it of many of its ills. We are aware how imperfect have been the instruments that had to be used by Gandhiji, and yet history will record that our object has been gained with the least possible sacrifice which any other country similarly situated could have been called upon to make. As the weapon has been unique, the opportunities which the achievement of freedom offers are equally unique. In our hour of victory and rejoicings we cannot afford to ignore either the leader who has led us or the undying principles which have inspired him. Freedom is only the means to a greater and nobler end, and the achievement of India of Mahatma Gandhi's dreams will be the fitting consummation of all that he has worked for and stands for. At this juncture we need to be reminded of the basis and fundamentals of his teachings. A book, which places before the reader not only those basic and fundamental principles, but also indicates how we can help to fulfil them through our freedom by establishing a polity and social life, and through the instrumentality of a constitution and the dedication of the human material

which this vast country will now throw up to work without any external fetters or internal inhibitions, will be welcomed by all. Shri R. K. Prabhu has proved his skill in making a selection of the most telling and significant passages from Mahatma Gandhi's writings and I have no doubt that this volume will be a useful addition to the literature on the subject.

New Delhi, RAJENDRA PRASAD

8th August, 1947.

PREFACE

In this work an attempt has been made, by assembling together passages from the writings and speeches of Mahatma Gandhi, to give the reader an idea of the part which he expects a completely free and independent India of his conception to play in her own domestic affairs as well as in her relations with the rest of the world. On 15th August 1947, India will have finally shaken off the yoke of foreign rule which for the past century and a half had held her soul in bondage and well-nigh ruined her materially, morally and spiritually. In the process of achieving her independence, however, her unity has been broken in many places and her soul has been badly bruised, owing to internecine quarrels, and the shape of "Swaraj" that is emerging is not at all what her patriotic sons and daughters had ardently longed for and struggled for all these decades. It is quite natural, therefore, that Gandhiji, the Father of Indian Independence, should feel little inclined to enthuse over the Independence that is dawning; and cry out, like the Vedic seer, "Lead us from darkness unto Light."

Gandhiji has refused to subscribe to the fantastic theory that the Muslims of India are "a separate nation". "My whole soul rebels against the idea that Hinduism and Islam represent two antagonistic cultures and doctrines", he has said. "To assent to such a doctrine is for me a denial of God. For I believe with my whole soul that the God of the Quran is also the God of the Gita, and that we are all, no matter by what name designated,

children of the same God. I must rebel against the idea that millions of Indians who were Hindus the other day changed their nationality on adopting Islam as their religion." He refuses to believe that India will remain forever partitioned, either geographically or spiritually, in the manner that is being sought to be done at present. "India does not become two nations," he says, "because it has been cut up into two sovereign States." He lives in the hope and will work in the hope that with the removal of the most serious obstacle in the way of her unity—the wedge driven by her alien rulers—and the healing of the wounds recently inflicted on her, the India of his dreams will yet emerge into reality in the not distant future.

The compiler of the present work, cognizant of the onerousness of the task before him and of his own shortcomings, is fully aware of the risks involved in trying to convey to the readers a conception of "India of Gandhiji's dreams" which may fall short, far short, of the picture which the master artist has drawn in the immortal pages of *Young India* and *Harijan* and in other collections of his writings and speeches. The compiler expresses the hope that he may not have deviated far from the correctness as well as comprehensiveness of that picture, inasmuch as the attempt to redraw the picture, on a reduced scale, has been made in Gandhiji's own words. For whatever shortcomings there still remain in the present work the compiler tenders his profuse apologies both to Gandhiji and to the reader.

R. K. P.

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CHAPTER I

THE INDIA OF MY DREAMS

Everything in India attracts me. It has everything that a human being with the highest possible aspirations can want.

India is essentially *karmabhumi* (land of duty) in contradistinction to *bhogabhumi* (land of enjoyment).

I feel that India's mission is different from that of others. India is fitted for the religious supremacy of the world. There is no parallel in the world for the process of purification that this country has voluntarily undergone. India is less in need of steel weapons, it has fought with divine weapons, it can still do so. Other nations have been votaries of brute force........India can win all by soul force. History supplies numerous instances to prove that brute force is as nothing before soul force. Poets have sung about it and seers have described their experiences.

I shall strive for a constitution, which will release India from all thraldom and patronage, and give her, if need be, the right to sin. I shall work for an India, in which the poorest shall feel that it is their country in whose making they have an effective voice; an India in which there shall be no high class and low class of people; an India in which all communities shall live in perfect harmony. There can be no room in such an India for the curse of untouchability or the curse of the intoxicating drinks and drugs. Women will enjoy the same rights as men. Since we shall be at peace with all the rest of

the world, neither exploiting, nor being exploited, we should have the smallest army imaginable. All interests not in conflict with the interests of the dumb millions will be scrupulously respected, whether foreign or indigenous........ This is the India of my dreams....... I shall be satisfied with nothing less.

India is one of the few nations on the earth which have retained some of their ancient institutions although they have been overlaid with superstition and error. But she has hitherto shown an inherent capacity for purging herself of error and superstition. My faith in her ability to solve the economic problems that face her millions has never been so bright as it is today.

I would like to see India free and strong so that she may offer herself a willing and pure sacrifice for the betterment of the world. India's freedom must revolutionize the world's outlook upon peace and war. Her impotence affects the whole of mankind.

An India prostrate at the feet of Europe can give no hope for humanity. An India awakened and free has a message of peace and goodwill to a groaning world.

There is no doubt that if India succeeds in regaining her liberty through non-violent means, she would have delivered her message to the others who are fighting for it, and what is perhaps more, she would have made the largest contribution yet known to the world peace.

I do believe that if India has patience enough to go through the fire of suffering and to resist any unlawful encroachment upon her own civilization which, imperfect though it undoubtedly is, has hitherto stood the ravages of time, she can make a lasting contribution to the peace and progress of the world.

I want the freedom of my country so that other countries may learn something from my free country, so that the resources of my country might be utilized for the benefit of mankind. Just as the cult of patriotism teaches us today that the individual has to die for the family, the family has to die for the village, the village for the district, the district for the province, the province for the country, even so a country has to be free in order that it may die, if necessary, for the benefit of the world. My love, therefore, of nationalism or my idea of nationalism is that my country may become free, that if need be the whole of the country may die, so that the human race may live. There is no room for race hatred there. Let that be our nationalism.

I want India to recognize that she has a soul that cannot perish and that can rise triumphant above every physical weakness and defy the physical combination of a whole world.

If India takes up the doctrine of the sword, she may gain momentary victory. Then India will cease to be the pride of my heart. I am wedded to India because I owe my all to her. I believe absolutely that she has a mission for all the world. She is not to copy Europe blindly. India's acceptance of the sword will be the hour of my trial. I hope I shall not be found wanting. My religion has no geographical limits. If I have a living faith in it, it will transcend my love for India herself. My life is dedicated to service of India through the religion of non-violence.

I want India's rise so that the whole world may benefit. I do not want India to rise on the ruin of other nations. If, therefore, India was strong and able, India

would send out to the world her treasures of art and health-giving spices, but will refuse to send out opium or intoxicating liquors, although the traffic may bring much material benefit to India.

India's destiny lies not along the bloody way of the West, of which it shows signs of tiredness, but along the bloodless way of peace that comes from a simple and godly life. India is in danger of losing her soul. She cannot lose it and live. She must not, therefore, lazily and helplessly say : 'I cannot escape the onrush from the West.' She must be strong enough to resist it for her own sake and that of the world.

When India becomes self-supporting, self-reliant, and proof against temptations and exploitation, she will cease to be the object of greedy attraction for any power in the West or the East and will then feel secure without having to carry the burden of expensive armaments. Her internal economy will be the strongest bulwark against aggression.

My ambition is much higher than independence. Through the deliverance of India, I seek to deliver the so-called weaker races of the earth from the crushing heels of Western exploitation.

I venture to suggest, in all humility, that if India reaches her destiny through truth and non-violence, she will have made no small contribution to the world peace for which all the nations of the earth are thirsting and she would also have, in that case, made some slight return for the help that those nations have been freely giving to her.

India, when she begins to exploit other nations—as she must do if she becomes industrialized—will be a curse

for other nations, a menace to the world.

If India makes violence her creed, and I have survived, I would not care to live in India. She will cease to evoke any pride in me. My patriotism is subservient to my religion. I cling to India like a child to its mother's breast, because I feel that she gives me the spiritual nourishment I need. She has the environment that responds to my highest aspirations. When that faith is gone, I shall feel like an orphan without hope of ever finding a guardian.

This I know that if India comes to her own demonstrably through non-violent means, India will never want to carry a vast army, an equally grand navy and a grander air force. If her self-consciousness rises to the height necessary to give her a non-violent victory in her fight for freedom, the world values will have changed and most of the paraphernalia of war would be found to be useless. Such an India may be a mere dream, a childish folly. But such in my opinion is undoubtedly the implication of India's becoming free through non-violence. When that freedom comes....it will have come through a gentlemanly understanding with Great Britain. But then it will not be an imperialistic haughty Britain manoeuvring for world supremacy, but a Britain humbly trying to serve the common end of humanity.

India will no longer then be helplessly driven into Britain's wars of exploitation, but hers will be the voice of a powerful nation seeking to keep under restraint all the violent forces of the world.

What policy the National Government will adopt I cannot say. I may not even survive it much as I would love to. If I do, I would advise the adoption of non-

violence to the utmost extent possible and that will be India's great contribution to the peace of the world and the establishment of a new world order. I expect that with the existence of so many martial races in India, all of whom will have a voice in the government of the day, the national policy will incline towards militarism of a modified character. I shall certainly hope that all the efforts........to show the efficacy of non-violence as a political force will not have gone in vain and a strong party representing true non-violence will exist in the country.

CHAPTER II

POORNA SWARAJ

The word *Swaraj* is a sacred word, a Vedic word, meaning self-rule and self-restraint, and not freedom from all restraint which "independence" often means.

By Swaraj I mean the government of India by the consent of the people as ascertained by the largest number of the adult population, male or female, native-born or domiciled, who have contributed by manual labour to the service of the State and who have taken the trouble of having registered their names as voters......Real Swaraj will come not by the acquisition of authority by a few but by the acquisition of the capacity by all to resist authority when it is abused. In other words, Swaraj is to be obtained by educating the masses to a sense of their capacity to regulate and control authority.

Self-government depends entirely upon our internal

strength, upon our ability to fight against the heaviest odds. Indeed, self-government which does not require that continuous striving to attain it and to sustain it is not worth the name. I have, therefore, endeavoured to show both in word and deed, that political self-government, that is self-government for a large number of men and women, is no better than individual self-government, and, therefore, it is to be attained by precisely the same means that are required for individual self-government or self-rule.

Swaraj for me means freedom for the meanest of our countrymen. I am not interested in freeing India merely from the English yoke. I am bent on freeing India from any yoke whatsoever. I have no desire to exchange "king log for king stork".

Swaraj by non-violent means can never mean an interval of chaos and anarchy. Swaraj by non-violence must be a progressively peaceful revolution such that the transference of power from a close corporation to the people's representatives will be as natural as the dropping of a fully ripe fruit from a well-nurtured tree. I know that nothing less is the implication of non-violence.

Our capacity for Swaraj depends upon our capacity for solving without reference to or intervention of Government, all the varied and complex problems that must arise in the affairs of one of the biggest and the most ancient nations like ours.

My Swaraj is to keep int act the genius of our civilization. I want to write many new things but they must all be written on the Indian slate. I would gladly borrow from the West when I can return the amount with decent interest.

Driving out the English will not by itself establish Swaraj in India. Of course we must fight when our liberty is interfered with. But what next? Do we want the Swaraj of barbarism, freedom to live like pigs in a pigsty without let or hindrance by anybody? Or do we want the Swaraj of orderliness in which every man and everything is in his or its proper place?......We shall be unfit for Swaraj if we are unconcerned about our neighbour's insanitation and are content merely to keep our own surroundings clean.

An Act of Parliament might give us constitutional Swaraj. But it will be a mere chimera that will profit us but little, if we are unable to solve these internal problems (village reconstruction, temperance, Hindu-Muslim unity, removal of untouchability). In fact, ability to solve these problems is the alpha and omega of real Swaraj, the Swaraj of the masses that we all want.

Even an Independence constitution is not an end in itself. Independence is wanted in order to remove the grievous defects of the present rule....Mere withdrawal of the English is not independence. It means the consciousness in the average villager that he is the maker of his own destiny, he is his own legislator through his chosen representatives.

The true meaning of Swaraj is that every member of the commonwealth is capable of defending his liberty against the whole world.

If Swaraj was not meant to civilize us, and to purify and stabilize our civilization, it would be nothing worth. The very essence of our civilization is that we give a paramount place to morality in all our affairs, public or private.

The Swaraj of my....our....dream recognizes no race or religious distinctions. Nor is it to be the monopoly of the lettered persons nor yet of monied men. Swaraj is to be for all, including the former, but emphatically including the maimed, the blind, the starving toiling millions.

It has been said that Indian Swaraj will be the rule of the majority community, i. e. the Hindus. There could not be a greater mistake than that. If it were to be true, I for one would refuse to call it Swaraj and would fight it with all the strength at my command, for to me Hind Swaraj is the rule of all people, is the rule of justice. Whether under that rule the ministers were Hindus or Musalmans or Sikhs and whether legislatures were exclusively filled by the Hindus or Musalmans or any other community, they would have to do even-handed justice.

Poorna Swaraj....'*Poorna*', complete, because it is as much for the prince as for the peasant, as much for the rich landowner as for the landless tiller of the soil, as much for the Hindus as for the Musalmans, as much for Parsis and Christians as for the Jains, Jews and Sikhs, irrespective of any distinction of caste or creed or status in life.

The very connotation of the word and the means of its attainment to which we are pledged—truth and non-violence—precludes all possibility of that Swaraj being more for some one than for the other, being partial to some and prejudicial to others.

The Swaraj of my dream is the poor man's Swaraj. The necessaries of life should be enjoyed by you in common with those enjoyed by the princes and the monied men. But that does not mean that they should have

palaces like theirs. They are not necessary for happiness. You or I would be lost in them. But you ought to get all the ordinary amenities of life that a rich man enjoys. I have not the slightest doubt that Swaraj is not *Poorna* Swaraj until these amenities are guaranteed to you under it.

My notion of Poorna Swaraj is not isolated independence but healthy and dignified independence. My nationalism, fierce though it is, is not exclusive, is not devised to harm any nation or individual. Legal maxims are not so legal as they are moral. I believe in the eternal truth of '*sic utere tuo ut alienum non laedas*' ('Use thy own property so as not to injure thy neighbour's').

It all depends upon what we mean by and want through Poorna Swaraj. If we mean an awakening among the masses, a knowledge among them of their true interest and ability to serve that interest against the whole world and if through Poorna Swaraj we want harmony, freedom from aggression from within or without, and a progressive improvement in the economic condition of the masses, we can gain our end without political power and by directly acting upon the powers that be.

Swaraj is the sum total of all activities that go to build up a free and vigorous nation conscious of the strength that comes from right doing.

Let there be no mistake about my conception of Swaraj. It is complete independence of alien control and complete economic independence. So at one end you have political independence, at the other the economic. It has two other ends. One of them is moral and social, the corresponding end is *Dharma*, i.e. religion in the

highest sense of the term. It includes Hinduism, Islam, Christianity, etc., but is superior to them all....Let us call this the square of Swaraj, which will be out of shape if any of its angles is untrue. In the language of the Congress we cannot achieve this political and economic freedom without truth and non-violence, in concrete terms, without a living faith in God and hence moral and social elevation.

The Swaraj of my conception will come only when all of us are firmly persuaded that our Swaraj has got to be won, worked and maintained through truth and *ahimsa* alone. True democracy or the Swaraj of the masses can never come through untruthful and violent means, for the simple reason that the natural corollary to their use would be to remove all opposition through the suppression or extermination of the antagonists. That does not make for individual freedom. Individual freedom can have the fullest play only under a regime of unadulterated *ahimsa*.

In Swaraj based on *ahimsa* people need not know their rights, but it is necessary for them to know their duties. There is no duty but creates a corresponding right, and those only are true rights which flow from a due performance of one's duties. Hence rights of citizenship accrue only to those who serve the State to which they belong. And they alone can do justice to the rights that accrue to them. Everyone possesses the right to tell lies or resort to goondaism. But the exercise of such a right is harmful both to the exerciser and society. But to him who observes truth and non-violence comes prestige, and prestige brings rights. And people who obtain rights as a result of performance of duty, exercise them

only for the service of society, never for themselves. Swaraj of a people means the sum total of the Swaraj (self-rule) of individuals. And such Swaraj comes only from performance by individuals of their duty as citizens. In it no one thinks of his rights. They come, when they are needed, for better performance of duty.

Under Swaraj based on non-violence nobody is anybody's enemy, everybody contributes his or her due quota to the common goal, all can read and write, and their knowledge keeps growing from day to day. Sickness and disease are reduced to the minimum. No one is a pauper and labour can always find employment. There is no place under such a government for gambling, drinking and immorality or for class hatred. The rich will use their riches wisely and usefully, and not squander them in increasing their pomp and worldly pleasures. It should not happen that a handful of rich people should live in jewelled palaces and the millions in miserable hovels devoid of sunlight or ventilation. In non-violent Swaraj there can be no encroachment upon just rights; contrariwise no one can possess unjust rights. In a well-organized State, usurpation should be an impossibility and it should be unnecessary to resort to force for dispossessing an usurper.

CHAPTER III

DARIDRANARAYAN

Daridranarayan is one of the millions of names by which humanity knows God who is unnameable and unfathomable by human understanding and it means God of the poor, God appearing in the hearts of the poor.

I recognize no God except the God that is to be found in the hearts of the dumb millions. They do not recognize His presence; I do. And I worship the God that is Truth or Truth which is God, through the service of these millions.

I dare not take before them the message of God. I may as well place before the dog over there the message of God as before those hungry millions who have no lustre in their eyes and whose only God is their bread. I can take before them a message of God only by taking the message of sacred work before them. It is good enough to talk of God whilst we are sitting here after a nice breakfast and looking forward to a nicer luncheon, but how am I to talk of God to the millions who have to go without two meals a day? To them God can only appear as bread and butter. Well, the peasants of India were getting their bread from their soil. I offered them the spinning wheel in order that they may get butter and if I appear today....in my loin-cloth it is because I come as the sole representative of those half-starved, half-naked dumb millions.

I am able to restrain myself from committing suicide by starvation because I have faith in India's awakening

and her ability to put herself on the way to freedom from this desolating pauperism. Without faith in such a possibility I should cease to take interest in living.

For the poor the economic is the spiritual. You cannot make any other appeal to those starving millions. It will fall flat on them. But you take food to them and they will regard you as their God. They are incapable of any other thought.

With this very hand I have collected soiled pies from them tied tightly in their rags. Talk to them of modern progress. Insult them by taking the name of God before them in vain. They will call you and me fiends if we talk about God to them. They know, if they know God at all, a God of terror, vengeance, a pitiless tyrant.

I suggest that we are thieves in a way. If I take anything that I do not need for my own immediate use and keep it, I thieve it from somebody else. It is the fundamental law of Nature, without exception, that Nature produces enough for our wants from day to day; and if only everybody took enough for himself and nothing more, there would be no pauperism in this world, there would be no man dying of starvation.

In India we have got many millions of people who have to be satisfied with one meal a day and that meal consisting of a *chappatti* containing no fat in it and a pinch of salt. You and I have no right to anything that we really have until these millions are clothed and fed. You and I ought to know better, must adjust our wants, and even undergo voluntary privation in order that they may be nursed, fed and clothed.

We are either ignorant or negligent of the divine law by virtue of which man has been given only his daily

bread and no more, with the result that there arise inequalities with all the misery attendant upon them. The rich have a superfluous store of things which they do not need and which are, therefore, neglected and wasted; while millions starve and are frozen to death for want of them. If each retained possession only of what he needed, no one would be in want and all would live in contentment.

We should be ashamed of resting or having a square meal so long as there is one able-bodied man or woman without work or food.

The golden rule....is resolutely to refuse to have what millions cannot. This ability to refuse will not descend upon us all of a sudden. The first thing is to cultivate the mental attitude that will not have possessions or facilities denied to millions and the next immediate thing is to rearrange our lives as fast as possible in accordance with that mentality.

Jesus, Muhammed, Buddha, Nanak, Kabir, Chaitanya, Shankara, Dayanand, Ramakrishna were men who exercised an immense influence over and moulded the character of thousands of men. The world is the richer for their having lived in it. And they were all men who deliberately embraced poverty as their lot.

God of himself seeks for his seat the heart of him who serves his fellow-men. Such was Abu Ben Adhem. He served his fellow-men and therefore his name topped the list of those who served God.

But who are the suffering and the woe-begone? The suppressed and the poverty-stricken. He who would be a *bhakta*, therefore, must serve these by body, soul and mind. He who does not even condescend to exert his

body to the extent of spinning for the sake of the poor and trots out lame excuses does not know the meaning of service. He who spins before the poor inviting them to do likewise serves God as no one else does. "He who gives Me even a trifle as a fruit or a flower or even a leaf in the spirit of *bhakti* is my servant," says the Lord in the *Bhagawadgita*. And He hath His footstool where live "the humble, the lowliest and lost". Spinning, therefore, for such is the greatest prayer, the greatest worship, the greatest sacrifice.

The easiest and the best way of identifying yourselves somewhat with these starving millions is to spread the message of the spinning-wheel in the three-fold manner suggested by me. You can spread it by becoming expert spinners, by wearing khadi, and by pecuniary contributions.

It is not enough that stray lawyers and doctors spin and weave or stray barbers and tailors do national service, but thousands of professional men, artisans and agriculturists should, whilst following their callings render national service by qualifying themselves, the literary professions by realizing the dignity of labour and the labouring professions realizing the dignity of literature, and all doing everything to uplift the nation and refraining from doing anything that would degrade it.

CHAPTER IV

CONSTRUCTIVE PROGRAMME

The constructive programme is a big undertaking including a number of items: (1) Hindu-Muslim or communal unity; (2) Removal of untouchability; (3) Prohibition; (4) Khadi; (5) Other village industries; (6) Village sanitation; (7) New or Basic Education; (8) Adult education; (9) Uplift of women; (10) Education in hygiene and health; (11) Propagation of Rashtrabhasha; (12) Cultivating love of one's own language; (13) Working for economic equality. The list can be supplemented if necessary, but it is so comprehensive that I think it can be proved to include items appearing to have been omitted. The reader will see that it is the want of all these things that is responsible for our bondage.

Let us glance at the various items. Without Hindu-Muslim, i. e. communal, unity we shall always remain crippled. And how can a crippled India win Swaraj? Communal unity means unity between Hindus, Sikhs, Musalmans, Christians, Parsis, Jews. All these go to make Hindustan. He who neglects any of these communities does not know constructive work.

As long as the curse of untouchability pollutes the mind of the Hindu, so long is he himself an untouchable in the eyes of the world, and an untouchable cannot win non-violent Swaraj. The removal of untouchability means treating the so-called untouchables as one's own kith and kin. He who does treat them so must be free from the sense of high and low, in fact free from all wrong

class-sense. He will regard the whole world as one family. Under non-violent Swaraj it will be impossible to conceive of any country as an enemy country.

Poorna Swaraj is impossible of attainment by people who have been or are slaves to intoxicating drinks or drugs. It must never be forgotten that a man in the grip of intoxicants is generally bereft of the moral sense.

Everyone now may be said to believe that without khadi there is no just and immediate solution of the problem of starvation of our millions. I need not therefore dilate upon it. I would only add that in the resuscitation of khadi lies the resuscitation of the ruined village artisans. Khadi requisites (wheels, looms, etc.) have to be made by the village carpenter and blacksmith. For unless these requisites are made in the village it cannot be self-contained and prosperous. The revival of khadi presupposes the revival of all other village industries.... As the solar system will be dark without the sun, even so will the sun be lustreless without the heavenly bodies. All things in the universe are interdependent. The salvation of India is impossible without the salvation of villages.

If rural reconstruction were not to include rural sanitation, our villages would remain the muck-heaps that they are today. Village sanitation is a vital part of village life and is as difficult as it is important. It needs a heroic effort to eradicate age-long insanitation. The village worker who is ignorant of the science of village sanitation, who is not a successful scavenger, cannot fit himself for village service.

It seems to be generally admitted that without the new or Basic Education the education of millions of

children in India is well-nigh impossible. The village worker has, therefore, to master it, and become a Basic Education teacher himself.

Adult education will follow in the wake of Basic Education as a matter of course. Where this new education has not taken root, the children themselves become their parents' teachers. Be that as it may, the village worker has to undertake adult education also.

Woman is described as man's better half. As long as she has not the same rights in law as man, as long as the birth of a girl does not receive the same welcome as that of a boy, so long we should know that India is suffering from partial paralysis. Suppression of woman is a denial of *ahimsa*. Every village worker will, therefore, regard every woman as his mother, sister, or daughter as the case may be, and look upon her with respect. Only such a worker will command the confidence of the village people.

It is impossible for an unhealthy people to win Swaraj. Therefore we should no longer be guilty of the neglect of the health of our people. Every village worker must have a knowledge of the general principles of health.

Without a common language no nation can come into being. Instead of worrying himself with the controversy about Hindi-Hindustani and Urdu, the village worker will acquire a knowledge of the Rashtrabhasha, which should be such as can be understood by both Hindus and Muslims.

Our infatuation for English has made us unfaithful to provincial languages. If only as penance for this unfaithfulness the village worker should cultivate in the

villagers a love of their own speech. He will have equal regard for all the other languages of India, and will learn the language of the part where he may be working, and thus be able to inspire the villagers there with a regard for their own speech.

The whole of this programme will, however, be a structure on sand if it is not built on the solid foundation of economic equality. Economic equality must never be supposed to mean possession of an equal amount of worldly goods by everyone. It does mean, however, that everyone will have a proper house to live in, sufficient and balanced food to eat, and sufficient khadi with which to cover himself. It also means that the cruel inequality that obtains today will be removed by purely non-violent means.

CHAPTER V

BACK TO THE VILLAGE

I have believed and repeated times without number that India is to be found not in its few cities but in its 7,00,000 villages. But we town-dwellers have believed that India is to be found in its towns and the villages were created to minister to our needs. We have hardly ever paused to inquire if those poor folk get sufficient to eat and clothe themselves with and whether they have a roof to shelter themselves from sun and rain.

I have found that the town-dweller has generally exploited the villager, in fact he has lived on the poor villager's subsistence. Many a British official has written

about the conditions of the people of India. No one has, to my knowledge, said that the Indian villager has enough to keep body and soul together. On the contrary they have admitted that the bulk of the population live on the verge of starvation and ten per cent are semi-starved, and that millions have to rest content with a pinch of dirty salt and chillies and polished rice or parched grain.

You may be sure that if any of us were to be asked to live on that diet, we should not expect to survive it longer than a month or should be afraid of losing our mental faculties. And yet our villagers go through that state from day to day.

Over 75 per cent of the population are agriculturists. But there cannot be much spirit of self-government about us if we take away or allow others to take away from them almost the whole of the result of their labour.

We are guilty of a grievous wrong against the villagers and the only way in which we can expiate is by encouraging them to revive their lost industries and arts by assuring them of a ready market.

We have got to show them that they can grow their vegetables, their greens, without much expense, and keep good health. We have also to show that most of the vitamins are lost when they cook the leaves.

What they need is not a knowledge of the three R's but a knowledge of their economic life and how they can better it. They are today working as mere automatons, without any responsibility whatsoever to their surroundings and without feeling the joy of work.

We have to teach them how to economize time, health and money. Lionel Curtis described our villages as dung-

heaps. We have to turn them into model villages. Our village-folk do not get fresh air though they are surrounded by fresh air; they don't get fresh food though they are surrounded by the freshest foods. I am talking like a missionary in this matter of food, because my mission is to make villages a thing of beauty.

The revival of village industries is but an extension of the khadi effort. Hand-spun cloth, hand-made paper, hand-pounded rice, home-made bread and jam are not uncommon in the West. Only there they do not have one-hundredth of the importance they have in India. With us their revival means life, their extinction means death to the villagers.

If we should have electricity in every village home, I should not mind villages plying their implements and tools, with the help of electricity. But then the village communities or the State would own power-houses just as they have their grazing pastures. But where there is no electricity and no machinery what are idle hands to do?

Villages have suffered long from neglect by those who have had the benefit of education. They have chosen the city life. The village movement is an attempt to establish healthy contact with the villages by inducing those who are fired with the spirit of service to settle in them and find self-expression in the service of villagers.

The village communities should be revived. Indian villages produced and supplied to the Indian towns and cities all their wants. India became impoverished when our cities became foreign markets and began to drain the villages dry by dumping cheap and shoddy goods from foreign lands.

It is only when the cities realize the duty of making an adequate return to the villages for the strength and sustenance which they derive from them, instead of selfishly exploiting them, that a healthy and moral relationship between the two will spring up. And if the city children are to play their part in this great and noble work of social reconstruction, the vocations through which they are to receive their education ought to be directly related to the requirements of the villages.

The village movement is as much an education of the city people as of the villagers. Workers drawn from cities have to develop village mentality and learn the art of living after the manner of villagers. This does not mean that they have to starve like the villagers. But it does mean that there must be a radical change in the old style of life.

We have got to be ideal villagers, not the villagers with their queer ideas about sanitation and giving no thought to how they eat and what they eat. Let us not, like most of them, cook anyhow, eat anyhow, live anyhow. Let us show them the ideal diet. Let us not go by mere likes and dislikes, but get at the root of those likes and dislikes.

We must identify ourselves with the villagers who toil under the hot sun beating on their bent backs and see how we would like to drink water from the pool in which the villagers bathe, wash their clothes and pots, in which their cattle drink and roll. Then and not till then shall we truly represent the masses and they will, as surely as I am writing this, respond to every call.

Since the economic reorganization of the villages has been commenced with food reform, it is necessary to

find out the simplest and cheapest foods that would enable the villagers to regain the lost health. The addition of green leaves to their meals will enable the villagers to avoid many diseases from which they are now suffering. The villagers' food is deficient in vitamins; many of them can be supplied by fresh green leaves. A proper use of green leaves was calculated to revolutionize the customary notions of food and much of what was today being supplied by milk might be supplied by green leaves.

The cities are capable of taking care of themselves. It is the village we have to turn to. We have to disabuse them of their prejudices, their superstitions, their narrow outlook and we can do so in no other manner than that of staying amongst them and sharing their joys and sorrows and spreading education and intelligent information among them.

CHAPTER VI

EVERY VILLAGE A REPUBLIC

Independence must begin at the bottom. Thus, every village will be a Republic or Panchayat having full powers. It follows, therefore, that every village has to be self-sustained and capable of managing its affairs even to the extent of defending itself against the whole world. It will be trained and prepared to perish in its attempt to defend itself against any onslaught from without. Thus, ultimately, it is the individual who is the unit. This does not exclude dependence on and willing

help from neighbours or from the world. It will be free and voluntary play of mutual forces. Such a society is necessarily highly cultured, in which every man and woman knows what he or she wants and, what is more, knows that no one should want anything that others cannot have with equal labour.

This society must naturally be based on Truth and Non-violence which, in my opinion, are not possible without a living belief in God, meaning a self-existent, all-knowing living force which inheres every other force known to the world but which depends on none and which will live when all other forces may conceivably perish or cease to act. I am unable to account for my life without belief in this all-living light.

In this structure composed of innumerable villages there will be ever widening, ever ascending circles. Life will not be a pyramid with the apex sustained by the bottom. But it will be an oceanic circle whose centre will be the individual always ready to perish for the village, the latter ready to perish for the circle of villages, till at last the whole becomes one life composed of individuals, never aggressive in their arrogance but ever humble, sharing the majesty of the oceanic circle of which they are integral units.

Therefore, the outermost circumference will not wield power to crush the inner circle but give strength to all within and derive its own from the centre. I may be taunted with the retort that this is all Utopian and therefore not worth a single thought. If Euclid's point, though incapable of being drawn by human agency, has an imperishable value, my picture has its own for mankind to live. Let India live for this true picture, though never

realizable in its completeness. We must have a proper picture of what we want before we can have something approaching it. If there ever is to be a republic of every village in India, then I claim verity for my picture in which the last is equal to the first, or in other words, none is to be the first and none the last.

In this picture every religion has its full and equal place. We are all leaves of a majestic tree whose trunk cannot be shaken off its roots which are deep down in the bowels of the earth. The mightiest of winds cannot move it.

In this there is no room for machines that would displace human labour and that would concentrate power in a few hands. Labour has its unique place in a cultured human family. Every machine that helps every individual has a place. But I must confess that I have never sat down to think out what that machine can be. I have thought of Singer's sewing machine. But even that is perfunctory. I do not need it to fill in my picture. The idea of village Swaraj is that it is a complete republic, independent of its neighbours for its own vital wants, and yet interdependent for many others in which dependence is necessary. Thus every village's first concern will be to grow its own food crops, and cotton for its cloth. It should have a reserve for its cattle, recreation and playground for adults and children. Then if there is more land available, it will grow *useful* money crops, thus excluding *ganja*, tobacco, opium and the like.

The village will maintain a village theatre, school and public hall. It will have its own waterworks ensuring clean water supply. This can be done through controlled wells or tanks. Education will be compulsory up to the final Basic course. As far as possible every activity

will be conducted on the co-operative basis. There will be no castes such as we have today with their graded untouchability.

Non-violence with its technique of Satyagraha and non-co-operation will be the sanction of the village community. There will be a compulsory service of village guards who will be selected by rotation from the register maintained by the village. The Government of the village will be conducted by a Panchayat of five persons annually elected by the adult villagers, male and female, possessing minimum prescribed qualifications. These will have all the authority and jurisdiction required. Since there will be no system of punishments in the accepted sense, this Panchayat will be the legislature, judiciary and executive combined to operate for its year of office.

Any village can become such a republic today without much interference, even from the present Government whose sole effectual connexion with the village is the exaction of the village revenue. I have not examined here the question of the relations with the neighbouring villages and the Centre, if any. My purpose is to present an outline of village government. Here is perfect democracy based upon individual freedom. The individual is the architect of his own Government. The law of non-violence rules him and his Government. He and his village are able to defy the might of the world. For the law governing every villager is that he will suffer death in the defence of his and his village's honour........

To model such a village may be the work of a lifetime. Any lover of democracy and village life can take up a village, treat it as his world and sole work, and he

will find good results. He begins by being the village scavenger, spinner, watchman, medicine-man and school-master all at once. If nobody comes near him he will be satisfied with scavenging and spinning.

VILLAGE EXHIBITIONS

If we want and believe that the village should not only survive but also become strong and flourishing, then the village perspective is the only correct view-point. If this is true then in our exhibitions there can be no place for the glamour and pomp of the cities. There should be no necessity for games and other entertainments that belong to the cities. An exhibition should not become a 'Tamasha', nor a source of income; it should never become the advertising medium for traders. No sales should be allowed there. Even khadi and village industry products should not be sold. An exhibition should be a medium of education, should be attractive and it should be such as to infuse in the villager the impulse to take to some industry or the other. It should bring out the glaring defects and drawbacks in the present-day village life, and show methods to be adopted to set them right. It should also be able to indicate the extent of achievement in that direction ever since the idea of village uplift was sponsored. It should also teach how to make village life artistic.

Now let us see what an exhibition will be like if it is to conform to the above conditions.

1. There should be two models of villages—one as is existing today and the other an improved one. The improved village will be clean all throughout. Its houses, its roads, its surroundings and its fields will be all clean.

The condition of the cattle should also improve. Books, charts and pictures should be used to show what industries give increased income and how.

2. It must show how to conduct the various village industries, wherefrom to obtain the needed implements, how to make them. The actual working of each industry should be demonstrated. Along with these the following should also find place:

(a) Ideal village diet.
(b) Comparison between village industry and machine industry.
(c) Model lessons on rearing animals.
(d) Art section.
(e) Model of village latrine.
(f) Farm-yard manure *vs.* chemical manure.
(g) Utilization of hides, bones, etc. of animals.
(h) Village music, musical instruments, village dramas.
(i) Village games, village *Akhadas* and forms of exercise.
(j) *Nayee Talim.*
(k) Village medicine.
(l) Village maternity home.

Subject to the policy enunciated in the beginning, this list may be further expanded. What I have indicated is by way of example only, it should not be taken to be exhaustive. I have not made any mention of the Charkha and other village industries as they are taken for granted. Without them the exhibition will be absolutely useless.

CHAPTER VII

CIVIC RESPONSIBILITIES

I visited the Vishwanath temple....and as I was walking through those lanes, these were the thoughts that touched me. If a stranger dropped from above on to this great temple and he had to consider what we Hindus were, would he not be justified in condemning us? Is not this great temple a reflection of our own character? I speak feelingly as a Hindu. Is it right that the lanes of our sacred temple should be as dirty as they are? The houses round about are built anyhow. The lanes are tortuous and narrow. If even our temples are not models of roominess and cleanliness, what can our self-government be? Shall our temples be abodes of holiness, cleanliness and peace as soon as the English have retired from India......?

In every city there are two divisions, the cantonment and the city proper. The city mostly is a stinking den. But we are a people unused to city life. But if we want city life, we cannot reproduce the easy-going hamlet life. It is not comforting to think that people walk about the streets of Indian Bombay under the perpetual fear of dwellers in the storeyed buildings spitting upon them. I do a great deal of railway travelling. I observe the difficulty of third class passengers. But the Railway Administration is by no means to blame for all their hard lot. We do not know the elementary laws of cleanliness. We spit anywhere on the carriage floor, oblivious of the thought that it is often used as sleeping space. We do

not trouble ourselves as to how we use it; the result is indescribable filth in the compartment. The so-called better class passengers overawe their less fortunate brethren. Among them I have seen the student world also....Surely we must set these things right in our progress towards self-government?

If night-soil was properly utilized, we would get manure worth lakhs of rupees and also secure immunity from a number of diseases. By our bad habits we spoil our sacred river banks and furnish excellent breeding grounds for flies, with the result that the very flies which through our criminal negligence settle upon uncovered night-soil defile our bodies after we have bathed. A small spade is the means of salvation from a great nuisance. Leaving night-soil, cleaning the nose, or spitting on the road is a sin against God as well as humanity, and betrays a sad want of consideration for others. The man who does not cover his waste deserves a heavy penalty even if he lives in a forest.

It is no use white-washing those needs which we know every day stare us in the face. It is not enough that we clear the villages which are occupied by our Pariah brethren. They are amenable to reason and persuasion. Shall we have to say that the so-called higher classes are not equally amenable to reason and persuasion and to hygienic laws which are indispensable in order to live a city-life? In a village we may do many things with impunity but immediately we transfer ourselves to crowded streets where we have hardly air to breathe, the life becomes changed, and we have to obey another set of laws which immediately come into being. Do we do that? It is no use saddling the municipality with

the responsibilities for the condition in which we find.... the central parts of every city of importance in India.... Sanitary reform in these big cities will be a hopeless task if we expect our municipalities to do this unaided by voluntary work.

Far be it from me to absolve the municipalities from their own responsibilities. I think there is a great deal yet to be done in the municipalities. The first essential condition of corporate life, that is city life, is that an absolutely clean supply of water is guaranteed to the dwellers of the city and its accommodation made perfectly clean and sweet.

I consider myself a lover of municipal life. I think that it is a rare privilege for a person to find himself in the position of a municipal councillor....Municipal councillors dare not approach their office from interested or selfish motives. They must approach their sacred task in a spirit of service. They should pride themselves upon calling themselves scavengers. There is a significant expression for municipal corporation in my mother-tongue —*Kach apatti*—which means literally scavenging department and a municipality is nothing if it is not a premier scavenging department embracing all spheres of public and social life of a city and if it is not saturated with the spirit of scavenging not merely by way of looking after the physical sanitation of a city, but also the internal sanitation of its citizens.

If I were a taxpayer within the jurisdiction of a local board or a municipality, I would refuse to pay a single pie by way of additional taxation and advise others to do likewise unless the money we pay is returned four-fold. Those who enter local boards and municipalities as

representatives go there not to seek honour or to indulge in mutual rivalries, but to render a service of love and that does not depend upon money. Ours is a pauper country. If our municipal councillors are imbued with a real spirit of service, they will convert themselves into unpaid sweepers, *bhangis* and road-makers, and take pride in doing so. They will invite their fellow-councillors, who may not have come on the Congress ticket, to join them and if they have faith in themselves and their mission, their example will not fail to evoke response. This means that a municipal councillor has to be a whole-timer. He should have no axe of his own to grind. The next step would be to map out the entire adult population within the jurisdiction of the municipality or the local board. All should be asked to make their contribution to municipal activities. A regular register should be maintained. Those who are too poor to make any money contributions but are able-bodied and physically fit can be asked to give their free labour.

CHAPTER VIII

A CALL TO YOUTH

My hope lies in the youth of the country. Such of them as are prey to vice are not vicious by nature. They are helplessly and thoughtlessly drawn to it. They must realize the harm that it has done them and society. They must understand too that nothing but a rigorously disciplined life will save them and the country from utter ruin.

Above all, unless they visualize God and seek His aid in keeping them from temptation, no amount of dry discipline will do them much good. Seeing God face to face is to feel that He is enthroned in our hearts even as a child feels a mother's affection without needing any demonstration.

Young men . . . claiming . . . to be the fathers of tomorrow should be the salt of the nation. If the salt loses its flavour wherewith shall it be salted?

Youth will be emotional all the world over. Hence the utter necessity of preconceived and deliberate *Brahmacharya* during the study period, i.e. at least 25 years.

Innocent youth is a priceless possession not to be squandered away for the sake of a momentary excitement miscalled pleasure.

I ask you [young men] to go to the villages and bury yourselves there, not as their masters or benefactors, but as their humble servants. Let them know what to do and how to change their modes of living from your daily conduct and way of living. Only feeling will be of no use just like steam which by itself is of no account unless it is kept under proper control—when it becomes a mighty force. I ask you to go forth as messengers of God carrying balm for the wounded soul of India.

The village work frightens us. We who are town bred find it trying to take to the village life. Our bodies in many cases do not respond to the hard life. But it is a difficulty which we have to face boldly, even heroically, if our desire is to establish Swaraj for the people, not substitute one class rule by another, which may be even worse. Hitherto the villagers have died in their thousands

so that we might live. Now we might have to die so that they may live. The difference will be fundamental. The former have died unknowingly and involuntarily. Their enforced sacrifice has degraded us. If now we die knowingly and willingly, our sacrifice will ennoble us and the whole nation. Let us not flinch from the necessary sacrifice, if we will live as an independent self-respecting nation.

India does not live in its towns but its villages. But if the cities want to demonstrate that their population will live for the villagers of India the bulk of their resources should be spent in ameliorating the condition of and befriending the poor.

We must not lord it over them, we must learn to be their servants. When the cities realize that they must live for the welfare of the poor, they will make their palaces and institutions and the life of their inhabitants correspond somewhat to our villages.

Who can become a village worker? For the work that is required of him each worker should have thorough knowledge, both theoretical and practical, of the science of spinning. If the worker is to live a model life in his village, he must know also the laws of civic sanitation and provide an object lesson in sanitation to the villages. He should know the domestic treatment of diseases of daily occurrence. He should know simple accountancy. Above all he must lead a pure and chaste life, if he is to make his mark amongst the villagers and gain their confidence. Naturally a village worker must find happiness in a simple and frugal life. The technique, though it reads formidable, is by no means so for a patient student. Purity of character must be a foregone

conclusion in any of this work. And no village worker can help falling a prey to some disease or other if he does not know and observe in his own person the laws of sanitation and does not know domestic treatment of simple diseases.

We have to tackle the triple malady which holds our villages fast in its grip: (i) want of corporate sanitation; (ii) deficient diet; (iii) inertia....They are not interested in their own welfare. They don't appreciate modern sanitary methods. They don't want to exert themselves beyond scratching their farms or doing such labour as they are used to. These difficulties are real and serious. But they must not baffle us. We must have an unquenchable faith in our mission. We must be patient with the people. We are ourselves novices in village work. We have to deal with a chronic disease. Patience and perseverance, if we have them, overcome mountains of difficulties. We are like nurses who may not leave their patients because they are reported to have an incurable disease.

The only way is to sit down in their midst and work away in steadfast faith, as their scavengers, their nurses, their servants, not as their patrons, and to forget all our prejudices and prepossessions. Let us for a moment forget even Swaraj, and certainly forget the 'haves' whose presence oppresses us at every step. They are there. There are many who are dealing with these big problems. Let us tackle the humbler work of the village which is necessary now and would be even after we have reached our goal. Indeed, the village work when it becomes successful will itself bring us nearer the goal.

The moment you talk to them [the Indian peasants]

and they begin to speak, you will find wisdom drops from their lips. Behind the crude exterior you will find a deep reservoir of spirituality. I call this culture—you will not find such a thing in the West. You try to engage a European peasant in conversation and you will find that he is uninterested in things spiritual.

In the case of the Indian villager, an age-old culture is hidden under an encrustment of crudeness. Take away the encrustation, remove his chronic poverty and his illiteracy and you have the finest specimen of what a cultured, cultivated, free citizen should be.

Village work . . . means real education,- not in the three R's, but in opening the minds of the villagers to the needs of true life befitting thinking beings which humans are supposed to be.

There is no school equal to a decent home and no teachers equal to honest virtuous parents. Modern (high school) education is a dead-weight on the villagers. Their children will never be able to get it, and thank God, they will never miss it if they have the training of a decent home. If the village worker is not a decent man or woman, capable of conducting a decent home, he or she had better not aspire after the high privilege and honour of becoming a village worker......What they need is not a knowledge of the three R's but a knowledge of their economic life and how they can better it. They are today working as automatons, without any responsibility whatsoever to their surroundings and without feeling the joy of work.

It is profitless to find out whether the villages of India were always what they are today. If they were never better it is a reflection upon the ancient culture in

which we take so much pride. But if they were never better, how is it that they have survived centuries of decay which we see going on around us?....The task before every lover of the country is how to prevent this decay or, which is the same thing, how to reconstruct the villages of India so that it may be as easy for anyone to live in them as it is supposed to be in the cities. Indeed, it is *the* task before every patriot. It may be that the villages are beyond redemption, that rural civilization has had its day and that the seven hundred thousand villages have to give place to seven hundred well-ordered cities supporting a population not of three hundred millions but thirty. If such is to be India's fate, even that won't come in a day. It must take time to wipe out a number of villages and villagers and transform the remainder into cities and citizens.

CHAPTER IX

THE GOSPEL OF SWADESHI

Swadeshi is that spirit in us which restricts us to the use and service of our immediate surroundings to the exclusion of the more remote. Thus, as for religion, in order to satisfy the requirements of the definition, I must restrict myself to my ancestral religion, that is, the use of my immediate religious surrounding. If I find it defective, I should serve it by purging it of its defects. In the domain of politics I should make use of the indigenous institutions and serve them by curing them of their proved defects. In that of economics I should use only things

that are produced by my immediate neighbours and serve those industries by making them efficient and complete where they might be found wanting. It is suggested that such Swadeshi, if reduced to practice, will lead to the millennium......

Let us briefly examine the three branches of Swadeshi as sketched above. Hinduism has become a conservative religion and, therefore, a mighty force because of the Swadeshi spirit underlying it. It is the most tolerant because it is non-proselytizing, and it is as capable of expansion today as it has been found to be in the past. It has succeeded not in driving out, as I think it has been erroneously held, but in absorbing Buddhism. By reason of the Swadeshi spirit, a Hindu refuses to change his religion, not necessarily because he considers it to be the best, but because he knows that he can complement it by introducing reforms. And what I have said about Hinduism is, I suppose, true of the other great faiths of the world, only it is held that it is specially so in the case of Hinduism. But here comes the point I am labouring to reach. If there is any substance in what I have said, will not the great missionary bodies of India, to whom she owes a deep debt of gratitude for what they have done and are doing, do still better and serve the spirit of Christianity better by dropping the goal of proselytizing while continuing their philanthropic work?

Following out the Swadeshi spirit, I observe the indigenous institutions, and the village *panchayats* hold me. India is really a republican country, and it is because it is that, that it has survived every shock hitherto delivered. Princes and potentates, whether they were Indian born or foreigners, have hardly touched the vast

masses except for collecting revenue. The latter in their turn seem to have rendered unto Caesar what was Caesar's and for the rest have done much as they have liked. The vast organization of caste answered not only to the religious wants of the community but it answered to its political needs. The villagers managed their internal affairs through the caste system, and through it they dealt with any oppression from the ruling power or powers. It is not possible to deny the organizing ability of a nation that was capable of producing from the caste system its wonderful power of organization. One has but to attend the great Kumbha Mela at Hardwar ...... to know how skilful that organization must have been which, without any seeming effort, was able effectively to cater for more than a million pilgrims. Yet it is the fashion to say that we lack organizing ability. This is true, I fear, to a certain extent, of those who have been nurtured in the new traditions.

We have laboured under a terrible handicap owing to an almost fatal departure from the Swadeshi spirit. We, the educated classes, have received our education through a foreign tongue. We have, therefore, not reacted upon the masses. We want to represent the masses, but we fail. They recognize us not much more than they recognize the English officers. Their hearts are an open book to neither. Their aspirations are not ours. Hence there is a break. And you witness not in reality failure to organize but want of correspondence between the representatives and the represented. If during the last fifty years we had been educated through the vernaculars, our elders and our servants and our neighbours would

have partaken of our knowledge; the discoveries of a Bose or a Ray would have been household treasures as are the Ramayan and the Mahabharat. As it is, so far as the masses are concerned, those great discoveries might as well have been made by foreigners. Had instruction in all the branches of learning been given through the vernaculars, I make bold to say that they would have been enriched wonderfully. The question of village sanitation, etc. would have been solved long ago. The village panchayats would be now a living force in a special way, and India would almost be enjoying self-government suited to her requirements, and would have been spared the humiliating spectacle of organized assassination on her sacred soil. It is not too late to mend.

And now for the last division of Swadeshi. Much of the deep poverty of the masses is due to the ruinous departure from Swadeshi in the economic and industrial life. If not one article of commerce had been brought from outside India, she would be today a land flowing with milk and honey. But that was not to be. We were greedy and so was England. The connexion between England and India was based clearly upon an error. But she does not remain in India in error. It is her declared policy that India is to be held in trust for her people. If this be true, Lancashire must stand aside. And if the Swadeshi doctrine is a sound doctrine, Lancashire can stand aside without hurt, though it may sustain a shock for the time being. I think of Swadeshi not as a boycott movement undertaken by way of revenge. I conceive it as a religious principle to be followed by all. I am no economist, but I have read some treatises which show that England could easily become a self-sustained

country, growing all the produce she needs. This may be an utterly ridiculous proposition, and perhaps the best proof that it cannot be true, is that England is one of the largest importers in the world. But India cannot live for Lancashire or any other country before she is able to live for herself. And she can live for herself only if she produces and is helped to produce everything for her requirements within her own borders. She need not be, she ought not to be, drawn into the vortex of mad and ruinous competition which breeds fratricide, jealousy and many other evils. But who is to stop her great millionaires from entering into the world competition? Certainly not legislation. Force of public opinion and proper education, however, can do a great deal in the desired direction. The hand-loom industry is in a dying condition. I took special care during my wanderings....to see as many weavers as possible, and my heart ached to find how they had lost, how families had retired from this once flourishing and honourable occupation.

If we follow the Swadeshi doctrine, it would be your duty and mine to find out neighbours who can supply our wants and to teach them to supply them where they do not know how to proceed, assuming that there are neighbours who are in want of healthy occupation. Then every village of India will almost be a self-supporting and self-contained unit, exchanging only such necessary commodities with other villages as are not locally producible. This may all sound nonsensical. Well, India is a country of nonsense. It is nonsensical to parch one's throat with thirst when a kindly Muhammedan is ready to offer pure water to drink. And yet thousands of Hindus would rather die of thirst than drink water from a Muhammedan

household. These nonsensical men can also, once they are convinced that their religion demands that they should wear garments manufactured in India only and eat food only grown in India, decline to wear any other clothing or eat any other food.

There is a verse in the *Bhagawadgita* which, freely rendered, means masses follow the classes. It is easy to undo the evil if the thinking portion of the community were to take the Swadeshi vow, even though it may for a time cause considerable inconvenience. I hate legislative interference in any department of life. At best it is the lesser evil. But I would tolerate, welcome—indeed, plead for a stiff protective duty upon foreign goods. Natal, a British colony, protected its sugar by taxing the sugar that came from another British colony, Mauritius. England has sinned against India by forcing free trade upon her. It may have been food for her, but it has been poison for this country.

It has often been urged that India cannot adopt Swadeshi in the economic life at any rate. Those who advance this objection do not look upon Swadeshi as a rule of life. With them it is a mere patriotic effort—not to be made if it involved any self-denial. Swadeshi, as defined here, is a religious discipline to be undergone in utter disregard of the physical discomfort it may cause to individuals. Under its spell the deprivation of a pin or a needle, because these are not manufactured in India, need cause no terror. A Swadeshist will learn to do without hundreds of things which today he considers necessary. Moreover, those who dismiss Swadeshi from their minds by arguing the impossible, forget that Swadeshi, after all, is a goal to be reached by steady effort. And we would

be making for the goal even if we confined Swadeshi to a given set of articles allowing ourselves as a temporary measure to use such things as might not be procurable in the country.

There now remains for me to consider one more objection that has been raised against Swadeshi. The objectors consider it to be a most selfish doctrine without any warrant in the civilized code of morality. With them to practise Swadeshi is to revert to barbarism. I cannot enter into a detailed analysis of the proposition. But I would urge that Swadeshi is the only doctrine consistent with the law of humility and love. It is arrogance to think of launching out to serve the whole of India when I am hardly able to serve even my own family. It were better to concentrate my effort upon the family and consider that through them I was serving the whole nation and, if you will, the whole of humanity. This is humility and it is love. The motive will determine the quality of the act. I may serve my family regardless of the sufferings I may cause to others. As, for instance, I may accept an employment which enables me to extort money from people. I enrich myself thereby and then satisfy many unlawful demands of the family. Here I am neither serving the family nor the State. Or I may recognize that God has given me hands and feet only to work with for my sustenance and for that of those who may be dependent upon me. I would then at once simplify my life and that of those whom I can directly reach. In this instance I would have served the family without causing injury to anyone else. Supposing that every one followed this mode of life, we should have at once an ideal state. All will not reach that state at the same time. But those of us who,

realizing its truth, enforce it in practice, will clearly anticipate and accelerate the coming of that happy day. Under this plan of life, in seeming to serve India to the exclusion of every other country, I do not harm any other country. My patriotism is both exclusive and inclusive. It is exclusive in the sense that in all humility I confine my attention to the land of my birth, but is inclusive in the sense that my service is not of a competitive or antagonistic nature. *Sic utere tuo ut alienum non la* is not merely a legal maxim, but it is a grand doctrine of life. It is the key to a proper practice of *ahimsa* or love.

CHAPTER X

THE MUSIC OF THE SPINNING-WHEEL

I feel convinced that the revival of hand-spinning and hand-weaving will make the largest contribution to the economic and the moral regeneration of India. The millions must have a simple industry to supplement agriculture. Spinning was the cottage industry years ago, and if the millions are to be saved from starvation, they must be enabled to reintroduce spinning in their homes, and every village must repossess its own weaver.

I think of the poor of India every time I draw a thread on the wheel. The poor of India today have lost faith in God, more so than the middle classes or the rich. For a person suffering from the pangs of hunger, and desiring nothing but to fill his belly, his belly is his God. To him anyone who gives him his bread is his Master. Through him he may even see God. To give alms to such persons,

who are sound in all their limbs, is to debase oneself and them. What they need is some kind of occupation, and the occupation that will give employment to millions can only be hand-spinning....I have described my spinning as a penance or sacrament. And, since I believe that where there is pure and active love for the poor there is God also, I see God in every thread that I draw on the spinning-wheel.

Our mills cannot today spin enough for our wants, and if they did, they would not keep down prices unless they were compelled. They are frankly money-makers and will not, therefore, regulate prices according to the needs of the nation. Hand-spinning is, therefore, designed to put millions of rupees in the hands of poor villagers. Every agricultural country requires a supplementary industry to enable the peasants to utilize the spare hours. Such industry for India has always been spinning.

My God is myriad-formed and while sometimes I see Him in the spinning-wheel, at other times I see Him in communal unity, then again in the removal of untouchability, and that is how I establish communion with Him according as the spirit moves me.

Spinning is a duty and a sacrament. India is dying. She is on death-bed. And have you ever watched a dying man? Have you ever felt his feet? You find that they are cold and numbed, though you still feel some warmth on the head and comfort yourselves that life is not yet gone out of him. But it is ebbing away. Even so the masses of India—the feet of the Mother—are cold and palsied. If you want to save India, do it by doing the little I ask for. I warn you. Take up the wheel betimes, or perish.

When I think of the agriculturist toiling in his field, I feel ill at ease. I am pining for the day when the ruling and the political class in the country will order their lives with due consideration for the poor agriculturist, and bridge the gulf that separates them from the poor. I do not grudge the prince his palace and the millionaire his mansion, but it is my earnest request to them to do something to bridge the gulf that separates them from the peasant. Let them construct a bridge that would bring them closer to the poor agriculturist. Let their lives bear some proportion to the lives of the poor around them. I have been trying according to my lights, to construct this bridge, a bridge which, I submit in all humility, you cannot construct by means of all your gold mines and Bhadravatis. I know too well that we need those mines of gold and iron. It is far from my project to destroy anything, I only want to construct, to reform or improve. And therefore I tell you that the thing that can bind us indissolubly in a holy bond with the poor is the fragile thread of cotton. The extent to which you add to the stock of cotton thread in the country, will determine the extent to which you will have bridged the gulf between the palace and the cottage. Hand-spinning does not—it is not intended that it should—compete with, in order to displace, any existing type of industry; it does not aim at withdrawing a single able-bodied person, who can otherwise find a remunerative occupation, from his work. The sole claim advanced on its behalf is that it alone offers an immediate, practicable, and permanent solution of that problem of problems that confronts India, viz. the enforced idleness for nearly six months in the year of an overwhelming majority of India's population, owing to

lack of a suitable supplementary occupation to agriculture and the chronic starvation of the masses that results therefrom.

I claim for the Charkha the honour of being able to solve the problem of economic distress in a most natural, simple, inexpensive and businesslike manner. The Charkha, therefore, is not only not useless....but is a useful and indispensable article for every home. It is the symbol of the nation's prosperity and, therefore, freedom. It is a symbol not of commercial war but of commercial peace. It bears not a message of ill-will towards the nations of the earth but of good-will and self-help. It will not need the protection of a navy threatening a world's peace and exploiting its resources, but it needs the religious determination of millions to spin their yarn in their own homes as today they cook their food in their own homes. I may deserve the curse of posterity for many mistakes of omission and commission, but I am confident of earning its blessings for suggesting a revival of the Charkha. I stake my all on it. For every revolution of the wheel spins peace, good-will and love. And with all that, inasmuch as the loss of it brought about India's slavery, its voluntary revival with all its implications must mean India's freedom.

CHAPTER XI

HINDU-MUSLIM UNITY

I am asking my countrymen today to adopt non-violence as their final creed......for the purpose of regulating the relations between the different races, and for the purpose of maintaining Swaraj. Hindus and Musalmans, Christians, Sikhs and Parsis must not settle their differences by resort to violence, and the means for the attainment of Swaraj must be non-violent. This I venture to place before India, not as a weapon of the weak, but of the strong. Hindus and Musalmans prate about no compulsion in religion. What is it but compulsion, if Hindus will kill a Musalman for saving a cow? It is like wanting to convert a Musalman to Hinduism by force. And similarly what is it but compulsion, if Musalmans seek to prevent by force Hindus from playing music before mosques? Virtue lies in being absorbed in one's prayers in the presence of din and noise. We shall both be voted irreligious savages by posterity if we continue to make a futile attempt to compel one another to respect our religious wishes.

I am sure that if we can but revert to our faith, if we ever had any, in non-violence limited only to the two purposes above referred to, the present tension between the two communities will largely subside. For, in my opinion, an attitude of non-violence in our mutual relations is an indispensable condition prior to a discussion of the remedies for the removal of the tension. It must be common cause between the

two communities that neither party shall take the law into its own hands, but that all points in dispute, wherever and whenever they arise, shall be decided by reference either to private arbitration, or to the law courts, if they wish. This is the whole meaning of non-violence, so far as communal matters are concerned. To put it another way, just as we do not break one another's heads in respect of civil matters, so may we not do even in respect of religious matters. This is the only pact that is immediately necessary between the parties, and I am sure that everything else will follow. Unless this elementary condition is recognized, we have no atmosphere for considering the ways and means of removing misunderstanding and arriving at an honourable, lasting settlement.

My non-violence does not admit of running away from danger and leaving dear ones unprotected. Between violence and cowardly flight, I can only prefer violence to cowardice. I can no more preach non-violence to a cowardly man than I can tempt a blind man to enjoy healthy scenes. Non-violence is the summit of bravery. And in my own experience, I have had no difficulty in demonstrating to men trained in the school of violence the superiority of non-violence. As a coward, which I was for years, I harboured violence. I began to prize non-violence only when I began to shed cowardice. Those Hindus who ran away from the post of duty when it was attended with danger did so not because they were non-violent, or because they were afraid to strike, but because they were unwilling to die or suffer an injury. A rabbit that runs away from the bull terrier is not particularly non-violent. The poor thing trembles at the sight of the

terrier and runs for very life.

The way, however, does not lie through *akhadas*—not that I mind them. On the contrary, I want them for physical culture. Then they should be for all. But, if they are meant as a preparation for self-defence in the Hindu-Musalman conflicts, they are foredoomed to failure. Musalmans can play the same game, and such preparations, secret or open, do but cause suspicion and irritation. They can provide no present remedy. It is for the thoughtful few to make quarrels impossible by making arbitration popular and obligatory.

My Hindu instinct tells me that all religions are more or less true. All proceed from the same God but all are imperfect because they have come down to us through imperfect human instrumentality. The real *Shuddhi* movement should consist in each one trying to arrive at perfection in his or her own faith. In such a plan character would be the only test. What is the use of crossing from one compartment to another, if it does not mean a moral rise? What is the meaning of my trying to convert to the service of God (for that must be the implication of *Shuddhi* or *Tabligh*) when those who are in my fold are every day denying God by their actions? "Physician, heal thyself" is more true in matters religious than mundane.

If Hindu-Muslim unity is endangered because an Arya Samaj preacher or a Musalman preacher preaches his faith in obedience to a call from within, that unity is only skin-deep. Why should we be ruffled by such movements? Only they must be genuine. If the Malkanas wanted to return to the Hindu fold they had a perfect right to do so whenever they liked. But no propaganda

can be allowed which reviles other religions. For, that would be negation of toleration. The best way of dealing with such propaganda is publicly to condemn it. Every movement attempts to put on the cloak of respectability. As soon as the public tear the cloak down, it dies for want of respectability.

It is now time to examine the treatment of two constant causes of friction.

The first is cow slaughter. Though I regard cow protection as the central fact of Hinduism, central because it is common to classes as well as masses, I have never been able to understand the antipathy towards the Musalmans on that score. We say nothing about the slaughter that daily takes place on behalf of Englishmen. Our anger becomes red-hot when a Musalman slaughters a cow. All the riots that have taken place in the name of the cow have been an insane waste of effort. They have not saved a single cow, but they have on the contrary stiffened the backs of the Musalmans and resulted in more slaughter....Cow protection should commence with ourselves. In no part of the world perhaps are cattle worse treated than in India. I have wept to see Hindu drivers goading their jaded oxen with the iron points of their cruel sticks. The half-starved condition of the majority of our cattle is a disgrace to us. The cows find their necks under the butcher's knife because Hindus sell them. The only effective and honourable way is to befriend the Musalmans and leave it to their honour to save the cow. Cow protection societies must turn their attention to the feeding of cattle, prevention of cruelty, preservation of the fast disappearing pasture lands, improving the breed of cattle, buying from poor

shepherds and turning *pinjrapols* into model self-supporting dairies. Hindus do sin against God and man when they omit to do any of the things I have described above. They commit no sin, if they cannot prevent cow slaughter at the hands of Musalmans, and they do sin grievously when in order to save the cow, they quarrel with the Musalmans.

The question of music before mosques, and now even *arati* in Hindu temples, has occupied my prayerful attention. This is a sore point with the Musalmans as cow slaughter is with the Hindus. And just as Hindus cannot compel Musalmans to refrain from killing cows, so can Musalmans not compel Hindus to stop music or *arati* at the point of the sword. They must trust the good sense of the Hindus. As a Hindu, I would certainly advise the Hindus, without any bargaining spirit, to consult the sentiment of their Musalman neighbours and wherever they can, accommodate them. I have heard that in some places, Hindus purposely and with the deliberate intention of irritating Musalmans, perform *arati* just when the Musalman prayers commence. This is an insensate and unfriendly act. Friendship presupposes the utmost attention to the feelings of a friend. It never requires consideration. But Musalmans should never expect to stop Hindu music by force. To yield to the threat or actual use of violence is a surrender of one's self-respect and religious conviction. But a person who never will yield to threat, would always minimize and if possible, even avoid occasions for causing irritation.

I am convinced that the masses do not want to fight, if the leaders do not. If, therefore, the leaders agree that mutual rows should be, as in all advanced countries,

erased out of our public life as being barbarous and irreligious, I have no doubt that the masses will quickly follow them.

Hindus if they want unity among different races must have the courage to trust the minorities. Any other adjustment must leave a nasty taste in the mouth. Surely the millions do not want to become legislators and municipal councillors. And if we have understood the proper use of Satyagraha, we should know that it can be and should be used against an unjust administrator whether he be a Hindu, Musalman or of any other race or denomination, whereas a just administrator or representative is always and equally good whether he be a Hindu or a Musalman. We want to do away with the communal spirit. The majority must therefore make the beginning and thus inspire the minorities with confidence in their bona fides. Adjustment is possible only when the more powerful take the initiative without waiting for response from the weaker.

So far as employment in the Government departments is concerned, I think it will be fatal to good government, if we introduce there the communal spirit. For administration to be efficient, it must always be in the hands of the fittest. There should be certainly no favouritism. But if we want five engineers we must not take one from each community but we must take the fittest five even if they were all Musalmans or all Parsis. The lowest posts must, if need be, be filled by examination by an impartial board consisting of men belonging to different communities. But distribution of posts should never be according to the proportion of the numbers of each community. The educationally backward communities

will have a right to receive favoured treatment in the matter of education at the hands of the national Government. This can be secured in an effective manner. But those who aspire to occupy responsible posts in the Government of the country, can only do so if they pass the required test.

For me the only question for immediate solution before the country is the Hindu-Musalman question. I agree with Mr. Jinnah that Hindu-Muslim unity means Swaraj. I see no way of achieving anything in this afflicted country without a lasting heart-unity between Hindus and Musalmans of India. I believe in the immediate possibility of achieving it, because it is so natural, so necessary for both, and because I believe in human nature. Musalmans may have much to answer for. I have come in closest touch with even what may be considered a 'bad lot'. I cannot recall a single occasion when I had to regret it. The Musalmans are brave, they are generous and trusting, the moment their suspicion is disarmed. Hindus living as they do in glass houses have no right to throw stones at their Musalman neighbours. See what we have done, are still doing, to the suppressed classes!

God does not punish directly. His ways are inscrutable. Who knows that all our woes are not due to that one black sin? The history of Islam, if it betrays aberrations from the moral height, has many a brilliant page. In its glorious days it was not intolerant. It commanded the admiration of the world. When the West was sunk in darkness a bright star rose in the Eastern firmament and gave light and comfort to a groaning world. Islam is not a false religion. Let the Hindus study it reverently,

and they will love it even as I do. If it has become gross and fanatical here, let us admit that we have had no small share in making it so. If Hindus set their house in order, I have not a shadow of doubt that Islam will respond in a manner worthy of its past liberal traditions. The key to the situation lies with the Hindus. We must shed timidity and cowardice. We must be brave enough to trust, and all will be well.

If and when the English retire, both the Muslims and the Hindus will find it profitable to live in peace as they used to do before the British advent. If there had been perpetual quarrels, one or the other would have been wiped out. When real independence comes to India, Congresses and Leagues will be nowhere unless they represent the real opinion of the country. The presence of the British bayonets has created an artificial condition which suppresses the natural play of human action and demoralizes both the suppressed and the suppressors.

CHAPTER XII

REGENERATION OF WOMEN

I believe in the proper education of women. But I do believe that women will not make their contribution to the world by mimicking or running a race with men. Woman can run the race, but she will not rise to the great heights she is capable of by mimicking man. She has to be complement of man.

Legislation has been mostly the handiwork of men; and man has not always been fair and discriminating in

performing that self-appointed task. The largest part of our effort, in promoting the regeneration of women, should be directed towards removing those blemishes which are represented in our *Shastras* as the necessary and ingrained characteristics of women. Who will attempt this and how? In my humble opinion, in order to make the attempt we will have to produce women pure, firm and self-controlled as Sita, Damayanti and Draupadi. If we do produce them, such modern sisters will have the same authority as the *Shastras*. We will feel ashamed of the stray reflections on them in our *Smritis*, and will soon forget them. Such revolutions have occurred in Hinduism in the past, and will still take place in the future, leading to the stability of our faith.

We have....considered the ideals by the realization of which the present condition of our women can be improved. The number of women who can realize those ideals will be necessarily very few, and, therefore, we will now consider what ordinary women can accomplish if they would try. Their first attempt should be directed towards awakening in the minds of as many women as possible a proper sense of their present condition. I am not among those who believe that such an effort can be made through literary education only. To work on that basis would be to postpone indefinitely the accomplishment of our aims; I have experienced at every step that it is not at all necessary to wait so long. We can bring home to our women the sad realities of their present condition without, in the first instance, giving them any literary education.

Woman is the companion of man, gifted with equal mental capacities. She has the right to participate in

every minute detail in the activities of man and she has an equal right of freedom and liberty with him. She is entitled to a supreme place in her own sphere of activity as man is in his. This ought to be the natural condition of things and not as a result only of learning to read and write. By sheer force of a vicious custom, even the most ignorant and worthless men have been enjoying a superiority over women which they do not deserve and ought not to have. Many of our movements stop half way because of the conditions of our women. Much of our work done does not yield appropriate results; our lot is like that of the penny wise and pound foolish trader who does not employ enough capital in his business.

But, although much good and useful work can be done without a knowledge of reading and writing, yet it is my firm belief that you cannot always do without a knowledge thereof. It develops and sharpens one's intellect and it stimulates our power of doing good. I have never placed an unnecessarily high value on the knowledge of reading and writing. I am only attempting to assign its proper place to it. I have pointed out from time to time that there is no justification for men to deprive women or to deny them equal rights on the ground of their illiteracy; but education is essential for enabling women to uphold these natural rights, to improve them and to spread them; again, the true knowledge of self is unattainable by the millions who are without such education. Many a book is full of innocent pleasure and this will be denied to us without education. It is no exaggeration to say that a human being without education is not far removed from an animal. Education, therefore, is necessary for women as it is for men. Not that the

methods of education should be identical in both cases. In the first place, our State system of education is full of error and productive of harm in many respects. It should be eschewed by men and women alike. Even if it were free from its present blemishes, I would not regard it as proper for women from all points of view. Man and woman are of equal rank but they are not identical. They are a peerless pair being supplementary to one another; each helps the other, so that without the one the existence of the other cannot be conceived, and, therefore, it follows as a necessary corollary from these facts that anything that will impair the status of either of them will involve the equal ruin of them both. In framing any scheme of women's education this cardinal truth must be constantly kept in mind. Man is supreme in the outward activities of a married pair and, therefore, it is in the fitness of things that he should have a greater knowledge thereof. On the other hand, home life is entirely the sphere of woman and, therefore in domestic affairs, in the upbringing and education of children, women ought to have more knowledge. Not that knowledge should be divided into watertight compartments, or that some branches of knowledge should be closed to any one; but unless courses of instruction are based on a discriminating appreciation of these basic principles, the fullest life of man and woman cannot be developed.

I have come to the conclusion that in the ordinary course of our lives neither our men nor our women need necessarily have any knowledge of English. True, English is necessary for making a living and for active association in our political movements. I do not believe in women working for a living or undertaking commercial

enterprises. The few women who may require or desire to have English education, can very easily have their way by joining the schools for men. To introduce English education in schools meant for women could only lead to prolongation of our helplessness. I have often read and heard people saying that the rich treasures of English literature should be opened alike to men and women. I submit in all humility that there is some misapprehension in assuming such an attitude. No one intends to close these treasures against women while keeping them open for men.

There is none on earth to prevent you from studying the literature of the world if you have literary tastes. But when courses of education have been framed with the needs of a particular society in view, you cannot supply the requirements of the few who have cultivated a literary taste. In asking our men and women to spend less time in the study of English than they are doing now, my object is not to deprive them of the pleasure which they are likely to derive from it, but I hold that the same pleasure can be obtained at less cost and trouble if we follow a more natural method. The world is full of many a gem of priceless beauty, but then these gems are not all of English setting. Other languages can well boast of productions of similar excellence; all these should be made available for our common people and that can only be done if our own learned men will undertake to translate them for us in our own languages.

Merely to have outlined a scheme of education as above is not to have removed the bane of child-marriage from our society or to have conferred on our women an equality of rights. Let us now consider the case of our

girls who disappear, so to say, from view after marriage. They are not likely to return to our schools. Conscious of the unspeakable and unthinkable sin of the child-marriage of their daughters, their mothers cannot think of educating them or of otherwise making their dry life a cheerful one. The man who marries a young girl does not do so out of any altruistic motives but through sheer lust. Who is to rescue these girls? A proper answer to this question will also be a solution of the women's problem. The answer is albeit difficult, but it is only one. There is, of course, none to champion her cause but her husband. It is useless to expect a child-wife to be able to bring round the man who has married her. The difficult work must, therefore, for the present at least be left to man. If I could, I would take a census of child-wives and would find the friends, and through moral and polite exhortations I would attempt to bring home to them the enormity of their crime in linking their fortunes with child-wives; and I would warn them that there is no expiation for that sin unless and until they have by education made their wives fit, not only to bear children but also to bring them up properly and unless in the mean time they live a life of absolute celibacy.

CHAPTER XIII

THE CURSE OF UNTOUCHABILITY

There is an ineffaceable blot that Hinduism today carries with it. I have declined to believe that it has been handed down to us from immemorial times. I think that

this miserable, wretched, enslaving spirit of "untouchableness" must have come to us when we were at our lowest ebb. This evil has stuck to us and still remains with us. It is, to my mind, a curse that has come to us, and as long as that curse remains with us, so long, I think, we are bound to consider that every affliction in this sacred land is a proper punishment for the indelible crime that we are committing.

Untouchability as it is practised in Hinduism today is, in my opinion, a sin against God and man and is, therefore, like a poison slowly eating into the very vitals of Hinduism. In my opinion, it has no sanction whatsoever in the Hindu *Shastras* taken as a whole. Untouchability of a healthy kind is undoubtedly to be found in the *Shastras* and it is universal in all religions. It is a rule of sanitation. That will exist to the end of time; but untouchability as we are observing today in India is a hideous thing and wears various forms in various provinces, even in districts. It has degraded both the untouchables and the touchables. It has stunted the growth of nearly 40 million human beings. They are denied even the ordinary amenities of life. The sooner, therefore, it is ended, the better for Hinduism, the better for India, and perhaps better for mankind in general.

Swaraj is a meaningless term, if we desire to keep a fifth of India under perpetual subjection, and deliberately deny to them the fruits of national culture. We are seeking the aid of God in this great purifying movement, but we deny to the most deserving among His creatures the rights of humanity. Inhuman ourselves, we may not plead before the Throne for deliverance from the inhumanity of others.

That untouchability is an old institution, nobody has ever denied. But if it is an evil, it cannot be defended on the ground of its antiquity. If the untouchables are the outcastes of the Aryan society, so much the worse for that society. And if the Aryans at some stage in their progress regarded a certain class of people as outcastes by way of punishment, there is no reason why that punishment should descend upon their progeny irrespective of the causes for which their ancestors were punished. That there is untouchability even amongst untouchables merely demonstrates that the evil cannot be confined and that its deadening effect is all-pervading. The existence of untouchability amongst untouchables is an additional reason for cultured Hindu society to rid itself of the curse with the quickest despatch. If the untouchables are so because they kill animals and because they have to do with flesh, blood, bones and night-soil, every nurse and every doctor should become an untouchable and so should Christians and Musalmans and all so-called high-class Hindus who kill animals for food or sacrifice. The argument that because slaughter-houses, toddy-shops, and houses of ill-fame are or should be isolated, untouchables should likewise be isolated betrays gross prejudice. Slaughter-houses and toddy-shops are and should be isolated. But, neither butchers nor publicans are isolated.

In attacking untouchability I have gone to the very root of the matter and, therefore, it is an issue of transcendental value, far surpassing Swaraj in terms of political constitutions and I would say that such a constitution would be a dead-weight if it was not backed by a moral basis, in the shape of the present hope engendered in the

breasts of the down-trodden millions that the weight is going to be lifted from their shoulders.

In its inception, untouchability was a rule of sanitation and still is in all parts of the world outside India. That is to say, an unclean person or thing is untouchable but immediately his or its uncleanliness is shed, he or it is no longer untouchable. Therefore, persons who are to attend to scavengering, whether a paid *bhangi* or an unpaid mother, are unclean until they have washed themselves clean of their unclean work. If instead of being regarded as untouchable for ever, the *bhangi* was treated as a brother and was given an opportunity and even made to become clean after performing an unclean service for society he should be as acceptable as any other member of that society.

I do not believe the caste system, even as distinguished from *Varnashrama*, to be an "odious, and vicious dogma". It has its limitations and its defects, but there is nothing sinful about it, as there is about untouchability, and if it is a by-product of the caste system it is only in the same sense that an ugly growth is of a body, or weeds of a crop. It is as wrong to destroy caste because of the outcaste, as it would be to destroy a body because of an ugly growth in it or of a crop because of the weeds. The outcastness, in the sense we understand it, has therefore to be destroyed altogether. It is an excess to be removed, if the whole system is not to perish. Untouchability is the product, therefore, not of the caste system, but of the distinction of high and low that has crept into Hinduism and is corroding it. The attack on untouchability is thus an attack upon this 'high-and-low'-ness. The moment untouchability goes, the caste system itself will be purified,

that is to say, according to my dreams, it will resolve itself into the true *Varnadharma*, the four divisions of society, each complementary of the other and none inferior or superior to any other, each as necessary for the whole body of Hinduism as any other.

CHAPTER XIV

THE EVIL OF DRINK

You will not be deceived by the specious argument that India must not be made sober by compulsion, and that those who wish to drink must have facilities provided for them. The State does not cater for the vices of its people. We do not regulate or license houses of ill-fame. We do not provide facilities for thieves to indulge their propensity for thieving. I hold drink to be more damnable than thieving and perhaps even prostitution. Is it not often the parent of both?

Drink is more a disease than a vice. I know scores of men who would gladly leave off drink if they could. I know some who have asked that the temptation might be put away from them. In spite of the temptation having been put away at their instance, I have known them to steal drink. I do not, therefore, think that it was wrong to have removed the temptation. Diseased persons have got to be helped against themselves.

Having identified myself with labour, I know what ruin drink has brought to the homes of labourers given to drink. I know that they will not touch liquor if it was not within easy reach. We have contemporaneous

evidence that drinkers themselves are in many cases asking for prohibition.

The drink habit destroys the soul of man and tends to turn him into a beast, incapable of distinguishing between wife, mother and sister. I have seen men who forget the distinction under the influence of liquor.

The drink and the drug evil is in many respects infinitely worse than the evil caused by malaria and the like; for, whilst the latter only injure the body, the former saps both body and soul.

I would rather have India reduced to a state of pauperism than have thousands of drunkards in our midst. I would rather have India without education if that is the price to be paid for making it dry.

Nothing but ruin stares a nation in the face that is prey to the drink habit. History records that empires have been destroyed through that habit. We have it in India that the great community to which Shri Krishna belonged was ruined by that habit. This monstrous evil was undoubtedly one of the contributory factors in the fall of Rome.

In no part of the world is prohibition as easy to carry out as in India, for with us it is only a minority that drinks. Drinking is generally considered disreputable. And there are millions, I believe, who have never known what drink is.

CHAPTER XV

NAYEE TALIM

In my opinion, intelligent labour is for the time being the only primary and adult education in this land of starving millions....Literary education should follow the education of the hand—the one gift that visibly distinguishes man from beast. It is a superstition to think that the fullest development of man is impossible without a knowledge of the art of reading and writing. That knowledge undoubtedly adds grace to life, but it is in no way indispensable for man's moral, physical, or material growth.

The object of Basic Education is the physical, intellectual and moral development of the children through the medium of a handicraft. But I hold that any scheme which is sound from the educative point of view and is efficiently managed is bound to be sound economically. For instance, we can teach our children to make clay toys that are to be destroyed afterwards. That too will develop their intellect. But it will neglect a very important moral principle, viz. that human labour and material should never be used in a wasteful or unproductive way. The emphasis laid on the principle of spending every minute of one's life usefully is the best education for citizenship and incidentally makes Basic Education self-sufficient.

I hold that true education of the intellect can only come through a proper exercise and training of the bodily organs, e.g. hands, feet, eyes, ears, nose, etc. In

other words, an intelligent use of the bodily organs in a child provides the best and quickest way of developing his intellect. But unless the development of the mind and body goes hand in hand with a corresponding awakening of the soul, the former alone would prove to be a poor lop-sided affair. By spiritual training I mean education of the heart. A proper and all-round development of the mind, therefore, can take place only when it proceeds *pari passu* with the education of the physical and spiritual faculties of the child. They constitute an indivisible whole. According to this theory, therefore, it would be a gross fallacy to suppose that they can be developed piecemeal or independently of one another.

The baneful effects of absence of proper co-ordination and harmony among the various faculties of body, mind and soul respectively are obvious. They are all around us; only we have lost perception of them owing to our present perverse associations.

Man is neither mere intellect, nor the gross animal body, nor the heart or soul alone. A proper and harmonious combination of all the three is required for the making of the whole man and constitutes the true economics of education.

Manual work will have to be the very centre of the whole thing....The manual training will not consist in producing articles for a school museum, or toys which have no value. It should produce marketable articles. The children will not do this as children used to do under the whip in the early days of the factories. They will do it because it entertains them and stimulates their intellect.

I am a firm believer in the principle of free and

compulsory Primary Education for India. I also hold that we shall realize this only by teaching the children a useful vocation and utilizing it as a means for cultivating their mental, physical and spiritual faculties. It will check the progressive decay of our villages and lay the foundation of a juster social order in which there is no unnatural division between the "haves" and the "have-nots" and everybody is assured of a living wage and the rights to freedom.

My plan to impart Primary Education through the medium of village handicrafts like spinning and carding, etc. is thus conceived as the spearhead of a silent social revolution fraught with the most far-reaching consequences. It will provide a healthy and moral basis of relationship between the city and the village and thus go a long way towards eradicating some of the worst evils of the present social insecurity and poisoned relationship between the classes.

CHAPTER XVI

NATIONAL LANGUAGE AND SCRIPT

I BELIEVE that:

1. Hindi, Hindustani and Urdu are words denoting the same language spoken in the north by Hindus and Musalmans, and written in either Devanagari or Persian script.

2. Hindi was the name for this language used both by Hindus and Musalmans before the word Urdu came to be used.

3. The word Hindustani also came to be used later (the date unknown to me) to denote the same speech.

4. Both Hindus and Musalmans should try to speak the language as understood by the vast mass of the people in the north.

5. At the same time, many Hindus and many Musalmans will persist in using Sanskrit words and Persian or Arabic words respectively and exclusively. This we shall have to bear so long as mutual distrust and aloofness continue. Those Hindus who care to know a certain class of Musalman thought will study Urdu written in Persian script; and, similarly, those Musalmans who care to know a certain class of Hindu thought will study Hindi written in Devanagari script.

6. Ultimately, when our hearts have become one and we all are proud of India as our country, rather than our provinces, and shall know and practice and relish different fruits of the same tree, we shall reach a common language with a common script whilst we shall retain provincial languages for provincial use.

7. The attempt to force one script or one form of Hindi on any province or district or people is detrimental to the best interests of the country.

8. The common language question should be viewed apart from the religious differences.

9. Roman script cannot and should not be the common script of India. The rivalry can only be between Persian and Devanagari. Apart from its intrinsic merit, the latter should be the common script for all India because most of the provincial scripts have their origin in Devanagari, and it is for them by far the easiest to learn. At the same time no attempt whatsoever should be made

to foist it upon Musalmans, and for that matter on those others who do not know it.

10. I served the cause of Urdu, if it may be distinguished from Hindi, when at Indore the Hindi Sahitya Sammelan, at my instance, accepted the definition given in clause 1 and when at Nagpur at my instance the Bharatiya Sahitya Parishad accepted the definition and called the common language of inter-provincial intercourse Hindi or Hindustani, thus giving fullest scope to both Musalmans and Hindus to identify themselves with the effort to enrich the common language and to interpret the best provincial thought in that language.

ROMAN SCRIPT?

At the present moment insistence on Devanagari for Musalmans is not to be thought of. Insistence on the adoption of Arabic script by the vast mass of Hindus is still less unthinkable. What, therefore, I have suggested as the definition of Hindi or Hindustani is "that language which is generally spoken by Hindus and Musalmans of the north whether written in Devanagari or Urdu". I abide by that definition in spite of protests to the contrary. But there is undoubtedly a Devanagari movement with which I have allied myself whole-heartedly and that is to have it as the common script for all the languages spoken in the different provinces, especially those which have a large Sanskrit vocabulary. Anyway, an attempt is being made to transcribe in Devanagari script the most precious treasures of all languages of India.

Different languages descended from or intimately connected with Sanskrit ought to have one script and that is surely Devanagari. Different scripts are an

unnecessary hindrance to the learning by the people of one province the language of other provinces. Even Europe which is not one nation has generally adopted one script. Why should India which claims to be and is one nation not have one script? I know I am inconsistent when I tolerate both Devanagari and Urdu scripts for the same language. But my inconsistency is not quite foolish. There is Hindu-Muslim friction at the present moment. It is wise and necessary for the educated Hindus and Muslims to show mutual respect and toleration to the utmost extent possible. Hence the option for Devanagari or Urdu scripts. Happily there is no friction between provinces and provinces. Hence the desirability of advocating a reform which means a closer knitting together of provinces in more ways than one. Let it be remembered that the vast mass of the people are wholly illiterate. It would be suicidal to impose on them different scripts for no other reason than a false sentiment and laziness to think . . .

I understand that some of the tribes in Assam are being taught to read and write through the Roman script instead of Devanagari. I have already expressed my opinion that the only script that is ever likely to be universal in India is Devanagari, either reformed or as it is. Urdu or Persian will go hand in hand unless Muslims of their own free will acknowledge the superiority of Devanagari from a purely scientific and national standpoint. But this is irrelevant to the present problem. The Roman cannot go hand in hand with the other two scripts. Protagonists of the Roman script would displace both. But sentiment and science alike are against the Roman script. Its sole merit is its

convenience for printing and typing purposes. But that is nothing compared to the strain its learning would put upon millions. It can be of no help to the millions who have to read their own literature either in their own provincial scripts or in Devanagari. Devanagari is easier for the millions of Hindus and even Muslims to learn, because the provincial scripts are mostly derived from it. I have included Muslims advisedly. The mother-tongue of Bengali Muslims, for instance, is Bengali, as is Tamil of Tamil Muslims. The present movement for the propagation of Urdu will, as it should, result in Muslims all over India learning Urdu in addition to their mother-tongue. They must, in any case, know Arabic for the purpose of learning the Holy Koran. But the millions, whether Hindus or Muslims, will never need the Roman script except when they wish to learn English. Similarly Hindus who want to read their scriptures in the original have to and do learn the Devanagari script. The movement for universalizing the Devanagari script has thus a sound basis. The introduction of the Roman script is a superimposition which can never become popular. And all superimpositions will be swept out of existence when the true mass awakening comes, as it is coming, much sooner than any of us can expect from known causes. Yet the awakening of millions does take time. It cannot be manufactured. It comes or seems to come mysteriously. National workers can merely hasten the process by anticipating the mass mind.

CHAPTER XVII

THE PLACE OF ENGLISH

It is my considered opinion that English education in the manner it has been given has emasculated the English-educated Indian, it has put a severe strain upon the Indian student's nervous energy, and has made of us imitators. The process of displacing the vernacular has been one of the saddest chapters in the British connexion. Ram Mohan Roy would have been a greater reformer and Lokmanya Tilak would have been a greater scholar, if they had not to start with the handicap of having to think in English and transmit their thoughts chiefly in English. Their effect on their people, marvellous as it was, would have been greater if they had been brought up under a less unnatural system. No doubt they both gained from their knowledge of the rich treasures of English literature. But these should have been accessible to them through their own vernaculars. No country can become a nation by producing a race of translators. Think of what would have happened to the English if they had not an authorized version of the Bible. I do believe that Chaitanya, Kabir, Nanak, Guru Govind Singh, Shivaji and Pratap were greater than Ram Mohan Roy and Tilak. I know that comparisons are odious. All are great in their own way. But judged by the results, the effect of Ram Mohan and Tilak on the masses is not so permanent or far-reaching as that of others more fortunately born. Judged by the obstacles they had to surmount, they

were giants; and both would have been greater in achieving results if they had not been handicapped by the system under which they received their training. I refuse to believe that the Raja and the Lokmanya could not have thought the thoughts they did without a knowledge of the English language. Of all the superstitions that affect India, none is so great as that a knowledge of English is necessary for imbibing ideas of liberty and developing accuracy of thought. It should be remembered that there has been only one system of education before the country for the past fifty years, and only one medium of expression forced on the country. We have therefore no data before us as to what we would have been but for the education in the existing schools and colleges. This, however, we do know, that India today is poorer than fifty years ago, less able to defend herself, and her children have less stamina. I need not be told that that is due to the defect in the system of government. The system of education is its most defective part. It was conceived and born in error, for the English rulers honestly believed the indigenous system to be worse than useless. It has been nurtured in sin, for the tendency has been to dwarf the Indian body, mind and soul.

English is today studied because of its commercial and so-called political value. Our boys think, and rightly in the present circumstances, that without English they cannot get Government service. Girls are taught English as a passport to marriage. I know several instances of women wanting to learn English so that they may be able to talk to Englishmen in English. I know husbands who are sorry that their wives cannot talk to them and

their friends in English. I know families in which English is being *made* the mother-tongue. Hundreds of youths believe that without a knowledge of English, freedom for India is practically impossible. The canker has so eaten into the society that, in many cases, the only meaning of education is a knowledge of English. All these are for me signs of our slavery and degradation. It is unbearable to me that the vernaculars should be crushed and starved as they have been. I cannot tolerate the idea of parents writing to their children, or husbands writing to their wives, not in their own vernaculars but in English.

I do not want my house to be walled in on all sides and my windows to be stuffed. I want the cultures of all the lands to be blown about my house as freely as possible. But I refuse to be blown off my feet by any. I refuse to live in other people's houses as an interloper, a beggar or a slave. I refuse to put the unnecessary strain of learning English upon my sisters for the sake of false pride or questionable social advantage. I would have our young men and young women with literary tastes to learn as much of English and other world-languages as they like, and then expect them to give the benefits of their learning to India and to the world, like a Bose, a Ray or a Tagore. But I would not have a single Indian to forget, neglect, or be ashamed of his mother-tongue or to feel that he or she cannot think or express the best thoughts in his or her own vernacular. Mine is not a religion of the prison-house. It has room for the least among God's creation. But it is proof against insolence, pride of race, religion, or colour.

Among the many evils of foreign rule, this blighting

imposition of a foreign medium upon the youth of the country will be counted by History as one of the greatest. It has sapped the energy of the nation, it has shortened the lives of the pupils. It has estranged them from the masses, it has made education unnecessarily expensive. If this process is still persisted in, it bids fair to rob the nation of its soul. The sooner, therefore, educated India shakes itself free from the hypnotic spell of the foreign medium, the better it would be for them and the people.

CHAPTER XVIII

A CODE FOR STUDENTS

(1) Students must not take part in party politics They are students, searchers, not politicians.

(2) They may not resort to political strikes. They must have their heroes but their devotion to them is to be shown by copying the best in their heroes, not by going on strikes if their heroes are imprisoned or die or are even sent to the gallows. If their grief is unbearable and if all the students feel equally, schools or colleges may be closed on such occasions with the consent of their principals. If the principals will not listen, it is open to the students to leave their institutions in a becoming manner till the managers repent and recall them. On no account may they use coercion against dissentients or against the authorities. They must have the confidence that if they are united and dignified in their conduct they are sure to win.

(3) They must all do sacrificial spinning in a scientific manner. Their tools shall be always neat, clean and in good order and condition. If possible, they will learn to make them themselves. Their yarn will naturally be of the highest quality. They will study the literature about spinning with all its economic, social, moral and political implications.

(4) They will be khadi users all through and use village products to the exclusion of all analogous things, foreign or machine made.

(5) They may not impose "Bande Mataram" or the National Flag on others. They may wear National Flag buttons on their own persons but not force others to do the same.

(6) They can enforce the message of the Tricolour Flag in their own persons and harbour neither communalism nor untouchability in their hearts. They will cultivate real friendship with students of other faiths and with Harijans as if they were their own kith and kin.

(7) They will make it a point to give first aid to their injured neighbours and do scavenging and cleaning in the neighbouring villages and instruct village children and adults.

(8) They will all learn the national language, Hindustani, in its present double dress—two forms of speech and two scripts—so that they may feel at home whether Hindi or Urdu is spoken and Nagari or Urdu script is written.

(9) They will translate into their own mother-tongue everything new they may learn and transmit it in their weekly rounds to the surrounding villages.

(10) They will do nothing in secret. They will be above-board in all their dealings, they will lead a pure life of self-restraint, shed all fear and be always ready to protect their weak fellow-students and be ready to quell riots by non-violent conduct at the risk of their lives. And when the final heat of the struggle comes they will leave their institutions and, if need be, sacrifice themselves for the freedom of their country.

(11) They will be scrupulously correct and chivalrous in their behaviour towards their girl fellow-students.

For working out the programme I have sketched for them, the students must find time. I know that they waste a great deal of time in idleness. By strict economy they can save hours. But I do not want to put an undue strain upon any student. I would, therefore, advise patriotic students to lose one year, not at a stretch, but spread over their whole study. They will find that one year so given will not be a waste of time. The effort will add to their equipment, mental, moral and physical, and they will have made even during their studies a substantial contribution to the freedom movement.

CHAPTER XIX

ECONOMIC VERSUS MORAL PROGRESS

Does economic progress clash with real progress? By economic progress, I take it, we mean material advancement without limit, and by real progress we mean moral progress, which again is the same thing as

progress of the permanent element in us. The subject may, therefore, be stated thus : Does not moral progress increase in the same proportion as material progress? I know that this is a wider proposition than the one before us. But I venture to think that we always mean the large one even when we lay down the smaller. For we know enough of science to realize that there is no such thing as perfect rest or repose in this visible universe of ours. If, therefore, material progress does not clash with moral progress, it must necessarily advance the latter. Nor can we be satisfied with the clumsy way in which sometimes those who cannot defend the large proposition put their case. They seem to be obsessed with the concrete case of thirty millions of India, stated by the late Sir William Wilson Hunter to be living on one meal a day. They say that, before we can think or talk of their moral welfare, we must satisfy their daily wants. With these, they say, material progress spells moral progress. And then is taken a sudden jump; what is true of thirty millions is true of the universe. They forget that hard cases make bad law. I need hardly say to you how ludicrously absurd this deduction would be. No one has ever suggested that grinding pauperism can lead to anything else than moral degradation. Every human being has a right to live and therefore to find the wherewithal to feed himself and where necessary to clothe and house himself. But for this very simple performance we need no assistance from economists or their laws.

"Take no thought for the morrow" is an injunction which finds an echo in almost all the religious scriptures of the world. In a well-ordered society the securing of

one's livelihood should be and is found to be the easiest thing in the world. Indeed, the test of orderliness in a country is not the number of millionaires it owns, but the absence of starvation among its masses. The only statement that has to be examined is, whether it can be laid down as a law of universal application that material advancement means moral progress.

Now let us take a few illustrations. Rome suffered a moral fall when it attained high material affluence. So did Egypt and so perhaps most countries of which we have any historical record. The descendants and kinsmen of the royal and divine Krishna too fell when they were rolling in riches. We do not deny to the Rockefellers and Carnegies possession of an ordinary measure of morality but we gladly judge them indulgently. I mean that we do not even expect them to satisfy the highest standard of morality. With them material gain has not necessarily meant moral gain. In South Africa, where I had the privilege of associating with thousands of our countrymen on most intimate terms, I observed almost invariably that the greater the possession of riches, the greater was their moral turpitude. Our rich men, to say the least, did not advance the moral struggle of passive resistance as did the poor. The rich men's sense of self-respect was not so much injured as that of the poorest. If I were not afraid of treading on dangerous ground, I would even come nearer home and show how that possession of riches has been a hindrance to real growth. I venture to think that the scriptures of the world are far safer and sounder treatises on the laws of economics than many of the modern text-books. The question we are asking ourselves ...... is not a new

one. It was addressed of Jesus two thousand years ago. St. Mark has vividly described the scene. Jesus is in his solemn mood. He is earnest. He talks of eternity. He knows the world about him. He is himself the greatest economist of his time. He succeeded in economizing time and space—he transcended them. It is to him at his best that one comes running, kneels down, and asks : "Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?" "And Jesus said unto him : 'Why callest thou me good? There is none good but one, that is God. Thou knowest the commandments. Do not commit adultery. Do not kill, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness. Defraud not, Honour thy Father and Mother.' And he answered and said unto him : 'Master, all these have I observed from my youth.' Then Jesus beholding him loved him and said unto him : 'One thing thou lackest. Go thy way, sell whatever thou hast and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven—come, take up the cross and follow me.'. And he was sad at that saying and went away grieved—for he had great possession. And Jesus looked round about and said unto the disciples : 'How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God.' And the disciples were astonished at his words. But Jesus answereth again and saith unto them : 'Children, how hard is it for them that trust in riches to enter into the kingdom of God. It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God!' " Here you have an eternal rule of life stated in the noblest words the English language is capable of producing. But the disciples nodded unbelief as we do even to this day. To him they said as we say today: "But

look how the law fails in practice. If we sell all and have nothing, we shall have nothing to eat. We must have money or we cannot even be reasonably moral." So they state their case thus: "And they were astonished out of measure, saying among themselves: 'Who then can be saved.' And Jesus looking upon them said: 'With men it is impossible, but not with God, for with God, all things are possible.' Then Peter began to say unto him: 'Lo, we have left all, and have followed thee.' And Jesus answered and said: 'Verily I say unto you, there is no man that has left house or brethren or sisters, or father or mother, or wife or children or lands for my sake and Gospel's but he shall receive one hundred-fold, now in this time houses and brethren and sisters and mothers and children and land, and in the world to come, eternal life. But many that are first shall be last and the last, first.' " You have here the result or reward, if you prefer the term, of following the law. I have not taken the trouble of copying similar passages from the other non-Hindu scriptures and I will not insult you by quoting, in support of the law stated by Jesus, passages from the writings and sayings of our own sages, passages even stronger, if possible, than the Biblical extracts I have drawn your attention to. Perhaps the strongest of all the testimonies in favour of the affirmative answer to the question before us are the lives of the greatest teachers of the world. Jesus, Muhammed, Buddha, Nanak, Kabir, Chaitanya, Shankara, Dayanand, Ramakrishna were men who exercised an immense influence over and moulded the character of thousands of men. The world is the richer for their having lived in it. And they were all men who

deliberately embraced poverty as their lot.

I should not have laboured my point as I have done, if I did not believe that, in so far as we have made the modern materialistic craze our goal, so far are we going downhill in the path of progress. I hold that economic progress in the sense I have put it is antagonistic to real progress. Hence the ancient ideal has been the limitation of activities promoting wealth. This does not put an end to all material ambition. We should still have, as we have always had, in our midst people who make the pursuit of wealth their aim in life. But we have always recognized that it is a fall from the ideal. It is a beautiful thing to know that the wealthiest amongst us have often felt that to have remained voluntarily poor would have been a higher state for them. That you cannot serve God and Mammon is an economic truth of the highest value. We have to make our choice. Western nations are today groaning under the heel of the monster god of materialism. Their moral growth has become stunted. They measure their progress in £. s. d. American wealth has become the standard. She is the envy of the other nations. I have heard many of our countrymen say that we will gain American wealth but avoid its methods. I venture to suggest that such an attempt, if it were made, is foredoomed to failure. We cannot be "wise, temperate and furious" in a moment. I would have our leaders teach us to be morally supreme in the world. This land of ours was once, we are told, the abode of the Gods. It is not possible to conceive Gods inhabiting a land which is made hideous by the smoke and the din of mill chimneys and factories and whose roadways are traversed by rushing engines, dragging numerous cars

crowded with men who know not for the most part what they are after, who are often absent-minded, and whose tempers do not improve by being uncomfortably packed like sardines in boxes and finding themselves in the midst of utter strangers, who would oust them if they could and whom they would, in their turn, oust similarly. I refer to these things because they are held to be symbolical of material progress. But they add not an atom to our happiness. This is what Wallace, the great scientist, has said as his deliberate judgment:

"In the earliest records which have come down to us from the past, we find ample indications that general ethical considerations and conceptions, the accepted standard of morality, and the conduct resulting from these, were in no degree inferior to those which prevail today."

In a series of chapters he then proceeds to examine the position of the English nation under the advance in wealth it has made. He says: "This rapid growth of wealth and increase of our power over Nature put too great a strain upon our crude civilization, on our superficial Christianity, and it was accompanied by various forms of social immorality almost as amazing and unprecedented." He then shows how factories have risen on the corpses of men, women and children, how, as the country has rapidly advanced in riches, it has gone down in morality. He shows this by dealing with insanitation, life-destroying trades, adulteration, bribery and gambling. He shows how with the advance of wealth, justice has become immoral, deaths from alcoholism and suicide have increased, the average of premature births and congenital defects has increased and

prostitution has become an institution. He concludes his examination with these pregnant remarks:

"The proceedings of the divorce courts show other aspects of the result of wealth and leisure, while a friend who had been a good deal in London society assured me that, both in country houses and in London, various kinds of orgies were occasionally to be met with, which would hardly have been surpassed in the period of the most dissolute emperors. Of war, too, I need say nothing. It has always been more or less chronic since the rise of the Roman Empire; but there is now undoubtedly a disinclination for war among all civilized peoples. Yet the vast burden of armaments taken together with the most pious declarations in favour of peace, must be held to show an almost total absence of morality as a guiding principle among the governing classes."

Under the British aegis we have learnt much, but it is my firm belief that there is little to gain from Britain in intrinsic morality, that if we are not careful, we shall introduce all the vices that she has been a prey to owing to the disease of materialism. We can profit by that connexion only if we keep our civilization, and our morals straight, i. e. if, instead of boasting of the glorious past, we express the ancient moral glory in our own lives and let our lives bear witness to our boast. Then we shall benefit her and ourselves. If we copy her because she provides us with rulers, both they and we shall suffer degradation. We need not be afraid of ideals or of reducing them to practice even to the uttermost. Ours will only then be a truly spiritual nation when we shall show more truth than gold, greater fear-

lessness than pomp of power and wealth, greater charity than love of self. If we will but cleanse our houses, our palaces and temples of the attributes of wealth and show in them the attributes of morality, we can offer battle to any combinations of hostile forces without having to carry the burden of a heavy militia. Let us seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, and the irrevocable promise is that everything will be added unto us. These are real economics. May you and I treasure them and enforce them in our daily life.

CHAPTER XX

INDIA AND SOCIALISM

Socialism was not born with the discovery of the misuse of capital by capitalists. As I have contended, socialism, even communism, is explicit in the first verse of *Ishopanishad*. What is true is that when some reformers lost faith in the method of conversion, the technique of what is known as scientific socialism was born. I am engaged in solving the same problem that faces scientific socialists. It is true, however, that my approach is always and only through unadulterated non-violence. It may fail. If it does, it will be because of my ignorance of the technique of non-violence. I may be a bad exponent of the doctrine in which my faith is daily increasing. The A.-I. S. A. and the A.-I. V. I. A. are organizations through which the technique of non-violence is being tested on an all-India scale. They are special autonomous bodies created by the Congress for

the purpose of enabling me to conduct my experiments without being fettered by the vicissitudes of policy to which a wholly democratic body like the Congress is always liable.

Real socialism has been handed down to us by our ancestors who taught : "All land belongs to Gopal; where then is the boundary line? Man is the maker of that line and he can, therefore, unmake it." Gopal literally means shepherd; it also means God. In modern language it means the State, i.e. the People. That the land today does not belong to the people is true. But the fault is not in the teaching. It is in us who have not lived up to it. I have no doubt that we can make as good an approach to it as is possible for any nation, not excluding Russia, and that without violence. The most effective substitute for violent dispossession is the wheel with all its implications. Land and all property is his who will work for it. Unfortunately the workers are or have been kept ignorant of this simple fact.

I have claimed that I was a socialist long before those I know in India had avowed their creed. But my socialism was natural to me and not adopted from any books. It came out of my unshakable belief in non-violence. No man can be actively non-violent and not rise against social injustice, no matter where it occurred. Unfortunately western socialists have, so far as I know, believed in the necessity of violence for enforcing socialist doctrines.

I have always held that social justice, even to the least and the lowliest is impossible of attainment by force. I have further believed that it is possible by proper training of the lowliest by non-violent means to secure redress

of the wrongs suffered by them. That means is non-violent non-co-operation. At times non-co-operation becomes as much a duty as co-operation. No one is bound to co-operate in one's own undoing or slavery. Freedom received through the effort of others, however benevolent, cannot be retained when such effort is withdrawn. In other words, such freedom is not real freedom. But the lowliest can feel its glow as soon as they learn the art of attaining it through non-violent non-co-operation...... I am quite sure that non-violent non-co-operation can secure what violence never can, and this by ultimate conversion of the wrong-doers. We in India have never given non-violence the trial it has deserved. The marvel is that we have attained so much even with our mixed non-violence.

No man should have more land than he needs for dignified sustenance. Who can dispute the fact that the grinding poverty of the masses is due to their having no land that they can call their own?.....But it must be realized that the reform cannot be rushed, if it is to be brought about by non-violent means; it can only be done by education both of "haves" and "have-nots".

WHO IS A SOCIALIST?

Socialism is a beautiful word and so far as I am aware in socialism all the members of society are equal—none low, none high. In the individual body, the head is not high because it is the top of the body, nor are the soles of the feet low because they touch the earth. Even as members of the individual body are equal, so are the members of society. This is socialism.

In it the prince and the peasant, the wealthy and

the poor, the employer and employee are all on the same level. In terms of religion there is no duality in socialism. It is all unity. Looking at society all the world over there is nothing but duality or plurality. Unity is conspicuous by its absence. This man is high, that one is low, that is a Hindu, that a Muslim, third a Christian, fourth a Parsi, fifth a Sikh, sixth a Jew. Even among these there are sub-divisions. In the unity of my conception there is perfect unity in the plurality of designs.

In order to reach this state we may not look on things philosophically and say that we need not make a move until all are converted to socialism. Without changing our life we may go on giving addresses, forming parties and hawk-like seize the game when it comes our way. This is no socialism. The more we treat it as game to be seized, the farther it must recede from us.

Socialism begins with the first convert. If there is one such, you can add zeros to the one and the first zero will count for ten and every addition will count for ten times the previous number. If, however, the beginner is a zero, in other words, no one makes the beginning, multiplicity of zeros will also produce zero value. Time and paper occupied in writing zeros will be so much waste.

This socialism is as pure as crystal. It, therefore, requires crystal-like means to achieve it. Impure means result in an impure end. Hence the prince and the peasant will not be equalized by cutting off the prince's head, nor can the process of cutting off equalize the employer and the employed. One cannot reach truth by untruthfulness. Truthful conduct alone can reach truth. Are not non-violence and truth twins? The answer is an emphatic "no". Non-violence is embedded in truth

and *vice versa*. Hence has it been said that they are faces of the same coin. Either is inseparable from the other. Read the coin either way. The spelling of words will be different. The value is the same. This blessed state is unattainable without perfect purity. Harbour impurity of mind or body and you have untruth and violence in you.

Therefore, only truthful, non-violent and pure-hearted socialists will be able to establish a socialistic society in India and the world. To my knowledge there is no country in the world which is purely socialistic. Without the means described above the existence of such a society is impossible.

Communism

Communism of the Russian type, that is, Communism which is imposed on a people, would be repugnant to India. If Communism came without violence, it would be welcome. For then no property would be held by anybody except on behalf of the people and for the people. A millionaire may have his millions, but he will hold them for the people. The State could take charge of them, whenever they would need them for the common cause.

What does Communism mean in the last analysis ? It means a classless society—an ideal that is worth striving for. Only I part company with it when force is called to aid for achieving it. We all are born equal, but we have all these centuries resisted the will of God. The idea of inequality, of "high and low" is an evil, but I do not believe in eradicating evil from the human breast at the point of the bayonet. The human breast does not lend itself to that means.

CHAPTER XXI

RIGHTS OR DUTIES ?

I want to deal with one great evil that is afflicting society today. The capitalist and the zamindar talk of their rights, the labourer on the other hand of his, the prince of his divine right to rule, the ryot of his to resist it. If all simply insist on rights and no duties, there will be utter confusion and chaos.

If instead of insisting on rights everyone does his duty, there will immediately be the rule of order established among mankind. There is no such thing as the divine right of kings to rule and the humble duty of the ryots to pay respectful obedience to their masters. Whilst it is true that these hereditary inequalities must go as being injurious to the well-being of the society, the unabashed assertion of rights of the hitherto down-trodden millions is equally injurious, if not more so, to the same well-being. The latter behaviour is probably calculated to injure the millions rather than the few claimants of divine rights. They could but die a brave or cowardly death but those few would not bring in the orderly life of blissful contentment. It is, therefore, necessary to understand the correlation of the rights and duties. I venture to suggest that rights that do not flow directly from duty well performed are not worth having. They will be usurpations sooner discarded the better. A wretched parent who claims obedience from his children without first doing his duty by them excites nothing but contempt. It is distortion of religious

precepts for a dissolute husband to expect compliance in every respect from his dutiful wife. But the children who flout their parent who is ever ready to do his duty towards them would be considered ungrateful and would harm themselves more than their parent. The same can be said about husband and wife. If you apply this simple and universal rule to employees and labourers, landlords and tenants, the princes and their subjects or the Hindus and the Muslims, you will find that the happiest relations can be established in all walks of life without creating disturbances in and dislocation of life and business which you see in India as in other parts of the world. What I call the law of *Satyagraha* is to be deduced from an appreciation of duties and rights flowing therefrom.

What is the duty of the Hindu towards his Muslim neighbour? His duty is to befriend him as man, to share his joys and sorrows and help him in distress. He will then have the right to expect similar treatment from his Muslim neighbour and will probably get the expected response. Supposing the Hindus are in a majority in a village with a sprinkling of Muslims in their midst, the duty of the majority towards the few Muslim neighbours is increased manifold, so much so that the few will not feel that their religion makes any difference in the behaviour of the Hindus towards them. The Hindus will *then* earn the right, *not* before, that the Muslims will be natural friends with them and in times of danger both the communities will act as one man. But suppose that the few Muslims do not reciprocate the correct behaviour of the many Hindus and show fight in every action, it will be a sign of unmanliness. What is then the duty

of the many Hindus? Certainly not to overpower them by the brute strength of the many; that will be usurpation of an unearned right. Their duty will be to check their unmanly behaviour as they would that of their blood brothers. It is unnecessary for me to dilate further upon the illustration. I will close it by saying that the application will be exactly the same if the position is reversed. From what I have said it is easy enough to extend the application with profit to the whole of the present state which has become baffling because people do not apply in practice the doctrine of deriving every right from a prior duty well performed.

The same rule applies to the princes and the ryots. The former's duty is to act as true servants of the people. They will rule not by right granted by some outside authority, never by the right of the sword. They will rule by right of service, of greater wisdom. They will then have the right to collect taxes voluntarily paid and expect certain services equally voluntarily rendered, not for themselves but for the sake of the people under their care. If they fail to perform this simple and primary duty, the ryots not only owe no return duty but the duty devolves on them of resisting the princely usurpation. It may be otherwise said that the ryots earn the right of resisting the usurpation or misrule. But the resistance will become a crime against man in terms of duty if it takes the form of murder, rapine and plunder. Force that performance of duty naturally generates is the non-violent and invincible force that *Satyagraha* brings into being.

CHAPTER XXII

THE TILLERS OF THE SOIL

If Indian society is to make real progress along peaceful lines, there must be a definite recognition on the part of the moneyed class that the ryot possesses the same soul that they do and that their wealth gives them no superiority over the poor. They must regard themselves even as the Japanese nobles did, as trustees holding their wealth for the good of their wards, the ryots. Then they would take no more than a reasonable amount as commission for their labours. At present there is no proportion between the wholly unnecessary pomp and extravagance of the moneyed class and the squalid surroundings and the grinding pauperism of the ryots in whose midst the former are living. A model zamindar would therefore at once reduce much of the burden the ryot is now bearing, he would come in intimate touch with the ryots and know their wants and inject hope into them in place of the despair which is killing the very life out of them. He will not be satisfied with the ryots' ignorance of the laws of sanitation and hygiene. He will reduce himself to poverty in order that the ryot may have the necessaries of life. He will study the economic condition of the ryots under his care, establish schools in which he will educate his own children side by side with those of ryots. He will purify the village well and the village tank. He will teach the ryot to sweep his roads and clean his latrines by himself doing this necessary labour. He will throw open without

reserve his own gardens for the unrestricted use of the ryot. He will use as hospital, school, or the like most of the unnecessary buildings which he keeps for his pleasure. If only the capitalist class will read the signs of the times, revise their notions of God-given right to all they possess, in an incredibly short space of time the seven hundred thousand dung-heaps which today pass muster as villages can be turned into abodes of peace, health and comfort. I am convinced that the capitalist, if he follows the Samurai of Japan, has nothing really to lose and everything to gain. There is no other choice than between voluntary surrender on the part of the capitalist of superfluities and consequent acquisition of the real happiness of all on the one hand, and on the other the impending chaos into which, if the capitalist does not wake up betimes, the awakened but ignorant and famishing millions will plunge the country and which not even the armed force that a powerful Government can bring into play can avert. I have hoped that India will successfully avert the disaster.

KISANS' RIGHTS

I have no doubt that if we have democratic Swaraj, as it must be if the freedom is won through non-violence, the Kisan must hold power in all its phases including political power.

If Swaraj is attained by the effort of the whole people, as it must be under non-violence, the Kisans must come into their own and have the uppermost voice. But if it is not so and there is a sort of a workable compromise between the people and the Government on the basis of a limited franchise, the interests of the tiller of the soil will need close watching. If the legislature proves itself

to be incapable of safeguarding Kisans' interests they will, of course, always have the sovereign remedy of civil disobedience and non-co-operation. But......ultimately it is not paper legislation nor brave words or fiery speeches but the power of non-violent organization, discipline and sacrifice that constitutes the real bulwark of the people against injustice or oppression.

CHAPTER XXIII

RIGHTS AND DUTIES OF LABOUR

I entertain such a high regard for labour that I have thrown in my lot with the labourers and for many, many years now I have lived in their midst like them labouring with my hands and with my feet. In labouring with your bodies you are simply following the law of your being, and there is not the slightest reason for you to feel dissatisfied with your lot. On the contrary, I would ask you to regard yourself as trustees for the nation for which you are labouring. A nation may do without its millionaires and without its capitalists, but a nation can never do without its labour.

It is my universal experience that as a rule labour discharges its obligations more effectively and more concientiously than the master who has corresponding obligations towards the labourers. It, therefore, becomes necessary for labour to find out how far labour can impose its will on the masters. If we find that we are not adequately paid or housed, how are we to receive enough wages, and good accommodation? Who is to determine

the standard of comfort required by the labourers? The best way, no doubt, is that you labourers understand your own rights, understand the method of enforcing your rights and enforce them. But for that you require a little previous training—education.

The greatest political contribution that labourers can make is to improve their own condition, to become better informed, to insist on their rights, and even to demand proper use by their employers of the manufactures in which they have had such an important hand. The proper evolution, therefore, would be for the labourers to raise themselves to the status of part proprietors.

The question before us is this : When the labourers, remaining what they are, develop a certain consciousness, what should be their course? It would be suicidal if the labourers rely upon their numbers or brute force, i.e. violence. By so doing they will do harm to industries in the country. If, on the other hand, they take their stand on pure justice and suffer in their person to secure it, not only will they always succeed but they will reform their masters, develop their industries and both master and men will be as members of one and the same family.

There is a conflict of interest between capital and labour, but we have to resolve it by doing our own duty. Just as pure blood is proof against poisonous germs, so will labour, when it is pure, be proof against exploitation. The labourer has to realize that labour is also capital. As soon as labourers are properly educated and organized and they realize their strength, no amount of capital can subdue them. Organized and enlightened labour can dictate its own terms. It is no use vowing vengeance against a party because we are weak. We have to get

strong. Strong hearts, enlightened minds and willing hands can brave all odds and remove all obstacles.

STRIKES

Strikes are the order of the day. They are a symptom of the existing unrest. All kinds of vague ideas are floating in the air. A vague hope inspires all, and great will be the disappointment if that vague hope does not take definite shape. The labour world in India, as elsewhere, is at the mercy of those who set up as advisers and guides. The latter are not always scrupulous, and not always wise even when they are scrupulous. The labourers are dissatisfied with their lot. They have every reason for dissatisfaction. They are being taught, and justly, to regard themselves as being chiefly instrumental in enriching their employers. And so it requires little effort to make them lay down their tools. The political situation too is beginning to affect the labourers of India. And there are not wanting labour leaders who consider that strikes may be engineered for political purposes.

In my opinion, it will be a most serious mistake to make use of labour strikes for such a purpose. I don't deny that such strikes can serve political ends. But they do not fall within the plan of non-violent non-co-operation. It does not require much effort of the intellect to perceive that it is a most dangerous thing to make political use of labour until labourers understand the political condition of the country and are prepared to work for the common good. This is hardly to be expected of them all of a sudden and until they have bettered their own condition so as to enable them to keep body and soul together in a decent manner.

Strikes, therefore, for the present should only take place for the direct betterment of the labourers' lot, and when they have acquired the spirit of patriotism, for the regulation of prices of the manufactures.

The conditions of a successful strike are simple. And when they are fulfilled a strike never need fail.

1. The cause of the strike must be just.

2. There should be practical unanimity among the strikers.

3. There should be no violence used against non-strikers.

4. Strikers should be able to maintain themselves during the strike period without falling back upon Union funds and should therefore occupy themselves in some useful and productive temporary occupation.

5. A strike is no remedy when there is enough other labour to replace strikers. In that case in the event of unjust treatment or inadequate wages or the like, resignation is the remedy.

The Curse of Industrialism

Why must India become industrial in the Western sense? The Western civilization is urban. Small countries like England or Italy may afford to urbanize their systems...... A big country like America with a very sparse population, perhaps, cannot do otherwise. But one would think that a big country, with a teeming population with an ancient rural tradition which has answered its purpose, need not, must not copy the Western model. What is good for one nation situated in one condition is not necessarily good for another differently situated. One man's food is often another's poison.

Mechanization is good when hands are too few for the work intended to be accomplished. It is an evil where there are more hands than required for the work as is the case in India. The problem with us is not how to find leisure for the teeming millions inhabiting our villages. The problem is how to utilize their idle hours, which are equal to the working days of six months in the year.

Dead machinery should not be pitted against the living machines represented by the villagers scattered in the seven hundred thousand villages of India. Machinery to be well used has to help and ease human effort. The present use of machinery tends more and more to concentrate wealth in the hands of a few, in total disregard of millions of men and women whose bread is snatched by it out of their mouths.

CHAPTER XXIV

THE PRINCES

My ideal for Indian States is that of Rama Rajya. Rama taking his cue from a washerman's remark and in order to satisfy his subjects abandoned Sita who was as dear to him as life itself and was the very incarnation of pity. Rama did justice even to a dog. By abandoning his kingdom and living in the forest for the sake of truth Rama gave to all kings of the world an object-lesson in noble conduct. By his strict monogamy he showed that a life of perfect self-restraint could be led by a royal householder. He lent splendour to his throne

by his popular administration and proved that Rama Rajya was the acme of Swaraj.

Such Rama Rajya is possible even today. The race of Rama is not extinct. In modern times the first Caliphs may be said to have established Rama Rajya. Abubaker and Hazrat Umar collected revenue running into crores and yet personally they were as good as *fakirs*. They received not a pie from the public treasury. They were ever watchful to see that the people got justice. It was their principle that one may not play false even with the enemy but must deal justly with him.

The popular saying, as is the king so are the people, is only a half-truth. That is to say, it is not more true than its converse, as are the People so is the Prince. Where the subjects are watchful a Prince is entirely dependent upon them for his status. Where the subjects are overtaken by sleepy indifference, there is every possibility that the Prince will cease to function as a protector and become an oppressor instead.

I know that, even as it is there is a growing school of public opinion in India which is convinced that the Princes are beyond reform, and that there would be no free India unless this "relic of a barbaric past" is done away with. I honestly differ with them and, as a believer in non-violence and, therefore, in the goodness of human nature, I could not do otherwise. They have a place in India. It is not possible to wipe out all the traditions of a hoary past. I, therefore, hold that if the Princes will read from the lessons of the past and will respond to the time spirit, all will be well. But it will not do to tinker with the problem. They will have to take heroic measures. ..... They will have to part with

real and substantial powers in favour of the people. There is, so far as I am aware, no *via media* of saving the situation and saving India from a terrible blood feud.

It is surely late in the day to talk of Hindu States and Muslim States. And what is the test ? Is Kashmir a Hindu State because a Hindu Prince happens to rule a territory which has an overwhelming majority of Muslims as its inhabitants? Or is Hyderabad with its overwhelming Hindu population a Muslim State because a Muslim Prince rules over their destiny? I regard this kind of talk as a libel on nationalism. Is India a Christian State because a Christian king rules over her destiny? But if India is Indian no matter who rules, the States are also Indian no matter who happens to be the ruler. And the present Rulers and their successors will rule only by the grace of an awakened people. The awakening that has taken place has come to stay. Every day quickens the pace. The Rulers and their advisers may succeed for the time being in suppressing the spirit of the people. They will never succeed in killing it. To succeed would be to kill the spirit of India . . . . And is it possible to conceive that an Independent India will for one moment tolerate repression in any single spot, be it ever so big or ever so small?

The British had occasionally hauled a Prince over the coals for misgovernance. But, by and large, the Princes had lived lives of ease and luxury and exploited their subjects. Now that the imperial Power was going, the Princes would naturally welcome its departure in the sense that the weight of Paramountcy was to be withdrawn. In another sense, they might foolishly resent the paramountcy of the ryots. . . . . They should regard

the people's paramountcy as a privilege to be prized. It would add to their moral weight and redound to their credit. But this meant that they should become truly the first servants of the people. They had to show the spirit of service in action. They should act on the advice of the Praja Mandals or real leaders of the people. That would be wisdom and, in that way alone could the people feel, with the rest of India, the glow of freedom.

CHAPTER XXV

THE PROBLEM OF MINORITIES

I have not a shadow of doubt that the iceberg of communal differences will melt under the warmth of the sun of freedom.

Without the problem of minorities being solved there is no Swaraj for India, there is no freedom for India. ..... But I do not despair of some day or other finding a real and living solution in connexion with the minorities problem. I repeat what I have said elsewhere—that so long as the wedge in the shape of foreign rule divides community from community and class from class, there will be no real living solution, there will be no living friendship between these communities. .... But immediately you withdraw that wedge, the domestic ties, the domestic affections, the knowledge of common birth—do you suppose that all these will count for nothing? Were Hindus and Musalmans and Sikhs always at war with one another when there was no British rule, when there was no English face seen here? We have chapter

and verse given to us by Hindu historians and by Musalman historians to say that we were living in comparative peace even then. And Hindus and Musalmans in the villages are not even today quarrelling. In those days they were not known to quarrel at all. . . . . This quarrel is not old. . . . . I dare say, it is co-eval with the British advent, and immediately this relationship, the unfortunate, artificial, unnatural relationship between Great Britain and India is transformed into a natural relationship, when it becomes a voluntary partnership to be given up, to be dissolved at the will of either party, when it becomes that you will find that Hindus, Musalmans, Sikhs, Europeans, Anglo-Indians, Christians, Untouchables, will all live together as one man.

Independent India cannot afford to have communal representation and yet it must placate all communities, if the rule of independence is not based on coercion of minorities.

Distribution of posts should never be according to the proportion of the number of each community. The educationally backward communities will have a right to receive favoured treatment in the matter of education at the hands of the National Government. But those who aspire to occupy responsible posts in the government of the country can only do so if they pass the required test.

The Rule of Majority

The rule of majority has a narrow application, i.e one should yield to the majority in matters of detail. But it is slavery to be amenable to the majority, no matter what its decisions are. Democracy is not a state in which people act like sheep. Under democracy,

individual liberty of opinion and action is jealously guarded. I, therefore, believe that the minority has a perfect right to act differently from the majority.

Claiming the right of free opinion and free action as we do, we must extend the same to others. The rule of majority when it becomes coercive, is as intolerable as that of a bureaucratic minority. We must patiently try to bring round the minority to our view by gentle persuasion and argument. Having been trained only to do things by order and under fear of punishment, we are likely, in the consciousness of strength we are daily acquiring, to repeat the mistakes of the rulers in an exaggerated form in our relations with those who may happen to be weaker than we are. That will be a worse state than the first.

I have repeatedly observed that no school of thought can claim a monopoly of right judgement. We are all liable to err and are often obliged to revise our judgements. In a vast country like this, there must be room for all schools of honest thought. And the least, therefore, that we owe to ourselves as to others is to try to understand the opponent's view-point and, if we cannot accept it, respect it as fully as we expect him to respect ours. It is one of the indispensable tests of a healthy public life and therefore fitness for *Swaraj*. If we have no charity, and no tolerance, we shall never settle our differences amicably and must, therefore, always submit to the arbitration of a third party, i.e. to foreign domination.

Hindustan belongs to all those who are born and bred here and who have no other country to look to. Therefore, it belongs to Parsis, Bene Israels, to Indian

Christians, Muslims and other non-Hindus as much as to Hindus. Free India will be no Hindu raj, it will be Indian raj based not on the majority of any religious sect or community but on the representatives of the whole people without distinction of religion. I can conceive of a mixed majority putting the Hindus in a minority. They would be elected for their record of service and merits. Religion is a personal matter which should have no place in politics. It is the unnatural condition of foreign domination that we have unnatural divisions according to religion. Foreign domination going, we shall laugh at our folly in having clung to false ideals and slogans.

Future of Europeans and Anglo-Indians

All foreigners will be welcome to stay here, only if they look upon themselves as one with the people. India cannot tolerate foreigners who wish to remain here with safeguards for their rights. This would mean that they want to live here as superior persons and such a position must lead to friction.

Let us assume that foreign rule is ended, what should the foreigner do? He could hardly be considered free when he was protected by British arms. As a free man, he will discover that it was wrong to possess privileges which the millions of India could not enjoy. He will live doing his duty as behoves a son of India. He will no longer live at India's expense. On the contrary, he will give India all his talents and by his services render himself indispensable to the land of his adoption.

If this is true of the European, how much more true must it be for those Anglo-Indians and others who have

adopted European manners and customs in order to be classed as Europeans demanding preferential treatment? All such people will find themselves ill at ease if they expect continuation of the favoured treatment hitherto enjoyed by them. They should rather feel thankful that they will be disburdened of preferential treatment to which they had no right by any known canon of reasoning and which was derogatory to their dignity.

His political right is in no danger. It is his social status which is non-existent. He frets over his Indian parentage and he is disowned by the European race. He is therefore between Scylla and Charybdis. I often meet him. He is washed out in the process of living above his means and trying to live the European life and look like Europeans. I have pleaded with him to make his choice and to throw in his lot with the vast multitude. If these men and women will have the courage and the foresight to appreciate this very simple and natural position, they will serve themselves, they will serve India and they will be spared the galling position in which they find themselves. The greatest problem before the dumb Anglo-Indian is that of determining his social status. He is saved, the moment he recognizes himself as an Indian and lives like one.

CHAPTER XXVI

HOW TO FACE CIVIL WAR

A friend sends the following questions :

Question (1) : You have all along held and expressed the view that persons should observe strict non-violence even when attacked by hooligans or others. Does this hold good when women are attacked or outraged? If people are unable to follow your lead regarding non-violence, would you advise them to die as cowards, or resist aggression with violence?

Question (2) : Should you not unequivocally condemn the dual role that the Muslim League is playing today? While, on the one hand, its leaders are openly preaching violence and *jehad* against Hindus, the same men continue, on the other hand, to hold office as Ministers having a controlling hand on all the threads of administration, including police and justice.

Question (3) : Is there no constituted authority in India which can put a stop to this grave anomaly, which is unprecedented in history?

Question (4): Do you realize that if the present happenings are allowed to continue, civil war will become inevitable? How would you advise your countrymen to face such a catastrophe, if it comes?

Answer (1): In a society of my imagination, the outrage posited by the questioner cannot take place. But in the society in the midst of which we are living, such outrages do take place. My answer is unequivocal. A non-violent man or woman will and should die without

retaliation, anger or malice, in self-defence or in defending the honour of his women-folk. This is the highest form of bravery.

If an individual or a group of people are unable or unwilling to follow this great law of life, which is miscalled my lead, retaliation or resistance unto death is the second best, though a long way off from the first. Cowardice is impotence, worse than violence. The coward desires revenge but being afraid to die, he looks to others, maybe the Government of the day, to do the work of defence for him. A coward is less than a man. He does not deserve to be a member of a society of men and women. Lastly, let me add that if women had followed or would now follow my advice every woman would protect herself without caring or waiting for aid from her brother or sister.

Answer (2): Of course the dual role adverted to is unequivocally bad. It is a sad chapter in our national life. My condemnation is of universal application. Fortunately, it is so bad that it cannot last long.

Answer (3): The only constituted authority is the British. We are all puppets in their hands. But it would be wrong and foolish to blame that authority. It acts according to its nature. That authority does not compel us to be puppets. We voluntarily run into their camp. It is, therefore, open to any and every one of us to refuse to play the British game.

Let us also admit frankly that the British authority is struggling to quit India. It does not know how. It honestly wants to leave India but wants before leaving to undo the wrong it has been doing for so long. Being in the position of the toad under the harrow, I must know

where it hurts. I have been telling the authority, if it will undo the wrong quickly, to leave India to her fate. But those who compose the British service cannot realize this obvious fact. They flatter themselves with the belief that they know India better than we do ourselves. Having successfully kept us under subjection for over a century, they claim the right to constitute themselves judges of our destiny. We may not grumb'e, if we are to come into our own through the way of peace. Satyagraha is never vindictive. It believes not in destruction but in conversion. Its failures are due to the weakness of the satyagrahi, not to any defect in the law itself. The British authority having decided to quit, whatever the reason, will show growing defects and weaknesses. Parties will find it is more and more a broken reed. And when parties quarrel as Hindus and Muslims do, let one or the other or both realize that if India is to be an independent nation one or both must deliberately cease to look to British authority for protection.

Answer (4): This brings me to the last question. We are not yet in the midst of civil war. But we are nearing it. At present, we are playing at it. War is a respectable term for goondaism practised on a mass or national scale. If the British are wise, they will keep clear of it. Appearances are to the contrary. Even the English members in the Provincial Assemblies refuse to see that they were given seats by the Act of 1935, not because it was right, but in order that they might protect British interests and keep Hindus and Muslims apart. But they do not see this. It is a small matter. Nevertheless, it is a straw showing the way the wind is blowing. Lovers and makers of Swaraj must not be dismayed by

these omens. My advice is Satyagraha first and Satyagraha last. There is no other or better road to freedom. Whoever wants to drink the ozone of freedom must steel himself against seeking military or police aid. He or they must ever rely upon their own strong arms or, what is infinitely better, their strong mind and will, which are independent of arms, their own or other.

CHAPTER XXVII

INDIA AND WORLD PEACE

I reiterate my conviction that there will be no peace for the Allies or the world unless they shed their belief in the efficacy of war and its accompanying terrible deception and fraud and are determined to hammer out real peace based on freedom and equality of all races and nations. Exploitation and domination of one nation over another can have no place in a world striving to put an end to all wars. In such a world only, the militarily weaker nations will be free from fear of intimidation or exploitation.

The better mind of the world desires today not absolutely independent States warring one against another, but a federation of friendly interdependent States. The consummation of that event may be far off. I want to make no grand claim for our country. But I see nothing grand or impossible about our expressing our readiness for universal interdependence rather than independence.

India has never waged war against any nation. She

has put up sometimes ill-organized or half-organized resistance in self-defence pure and simple. She has, therefore, not got to develop the will for peace. She has that in abundance whether she knows it or not. The way she can promote peace is to offer successful resistance to her exploitation by peaceful means. That is to say, she has to achieve her independence .....by peaceful means. If she can do this it will be the largest contribution that any single nation will have made towards world peace.

Our nationalism can be no peril to other nations inasmuch as we will exploit none, just as we allow none to exploit us. Through Swaraj we will serve the whole world.

CHAPTER XXVIII

"LEAD US FROM DARKNESS UNTO LIGHT"

Addressing the prayer meeting at Delhi on July 6, 1947, Mahatma Gandhi said that the reason for lack of enthusiasm that should accompany such a great event as the imminent advent of full freedom was the division of the country into two States which were to be turned into two armed camps. For there was to be no common defence force. The army was to be divided. Preparations were being made apace to that end. They used to talk glibly during the glorious and strenuous days of opposition to British rule of having no army for the suppression of internecine quarrels which would be non-existent and they wanted no defence force against a foreign enemy.

Now, alas, their military expenditure was maintained at a very high level without any near prospect of substantial reduction. Indeed, he visualized a definite increase in the military expenditure "all for fight among ourselves". They were to be engaged in a ludicrous race for increase in armament—no nation-building expenditure, no expenditure for education and the like. It was all to be for mutual slaughter.

He could discover in that no reason for gratification or glorification. The outlook was dismal. Was India's freedom a preparation for the abandonment of all they had learnt to prize as dear to them? Instead of self-glorification, it was a time for deep self-introspection. As the chief actor in the fight for freedom during the past thirty years, he was certainly full of searching questions within himself. Was the fight acclaimed as noble to result in this the approaching inglorious end? He cried with the Vedic seer: "O Lord, lead us from darkness unto Light!"

Addressing the prayer meeting on July 7, 1947, Gandhiji said :

"Last evening I showed why the coming freedom seemed to create no enthusiasm. This evening I propose to show how we can, if we will, turn the calamity into a blessing. It will profit us nothing to brood over the past or blame this party or that. Technically, freedom is yet to come, a few days hence. In fact, the parties having jointly accepted the situation, there is no turning back. Only the inscrutable Providence can undo what men have agreed to do.

"One easy and ready way out is for the Congress and the League to come together and arrive at a mutual

understanding without the intervention of the Viceroy. The League has to make the first move. I do not at all suggest the undoing of Pakistan. Let that be treated as an established fact beyond dispute or discussion. But they can sit together in a mud hut large enough to accommodate no more than ten representatives and undertake not to part till they have reached an agreement. I dare swear that if such an event occurs it will be infinitely better than the Bill recognizing the independence of India cut up into two States enjoying equal status.

"Neither Hindus nor Muslims are happy over what is happening before their helpless selves. This is first-hand evidence unless the Hindus and Muslims who daily see me or correspond with me are deceiving me. But—it is a big but—I seem to be aiming at the impossible. Now that the British intervention has done the trick, how can the League be expected to come down to their adversaries and produce an agreed settlement as between brothers and friends?

"There is an alternative which is also almost, if not quite, as difficult. This creation of two opposing armies out of one, hitherto with one and a common goal, whatever it was, must frighten every lover of India. Will the two armies be created, not in order to face and fight a common danger, but to destroy one another and demonstrate to a gaping world that they were unfit for any other purpose but to fight one another unto death?

"I have put the prospect in its awful nakedness so that everyone may see and shun it. The alternative escape is undoubtedly attractive. Will the vast mass of Hindus and those who had joined them in the struggle for independence realize the danger in its proper perspective

and rise to the occasion and swear even now that they do not wish to have any army at all or at least refuse ever to use it against their Muslim brethren whether in their Union or outside it in Pakistan? This proposal is tantamount to asking the Hindus and their associates to turn thirty years' weakness into strength of great beauty. Perhaps to state the problem thus is to demonstrate its absurdity—may be God has been known before now to turn man's folly into wisdom. The effort is worth making for the sake of all the parties who have subscribed to the dangerous division of the army into two self-destroying warring camps."



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BC *The Bombay Chronicle*, daily newspaper published in Bombay.

EF *The Epic Fast*, by Pyarelal. Mohanlal Maganlal Bhat, Ahmedabad, 1932.

GIV *Gandhiji in Indian Villages*, by Mahadev Desai. S. Ganesan, Madras, 1927.

GUP *Gram Udyog Patrika*, monthly journal of All-India Village Industries Association, Wardha.

H *Harijan*, weekly journal, edited by Gandhiji and others and published at Ahmedabad.

MG *Mahatma Gandhi*, Ganesh and Co., Madras, 1918.

SSA *Satyagraha in South Africa*, by M. K. Gandhi. S. Ganesan, Madras, 1928.

SW *Speeches and Writings of Mahatma Gandhi*. G. A. Natesan, Madras, 1933.

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